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ANTEBELLUM WRITER-TRAVELERS AND AMERICAN COSMOPOLITANISM

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ABSTRACT

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James Fenimore Cooper, George Catlin, and Margaret Fuller all spent significant portions of their lives living outside the United States, among people who – at least initially – were foreign to them. The writing those cross-cultural forays inspired demonstrated that they learned a great deal about American culture in addition to the foreign cultures they visited, and that sometimes the insights gained were difficult to hear but impossible to refute. These writers became advocates for a cosmopolitan approach not only to travel but also to cultural identity. Each felt the slipperiness of U.S. cultural identity and determined that the most productive means of securing it was by active cosmopolitan engagement with foreign others. This project explores how travel led them to view culture as a moveable category, and as a result, to work proactively to encourage a culture of patriotic cosmopolitanism in the United States. While Fuller, Cooper, and Catlin lived and wrote, the United States was marked by an isolating insistence on exceptionalism that dominated American culture. Calls for transformative, active, or personal engagement with foreign cultures were rare. Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller were dissimilar in many ways, but all enacted a cosmopolitanism that was unusual for their time and striking in its opposition to nationalist cultural currents. Their careers were defined by travel experiences marked by challenges to their cultural identity, and they met these with self-reflection that led to their awareness of the treatment cultural others received from Americans. Engaging with both Amerindian and European versions of “foreignness” led these writers to preach a cosmopolitan consciousness and to model the best ways for Americans to comport themselves while acting as citizen diplomats.

A close reading of Catlin's presence as cultural intermediary in his ethnography reveals a

man seeking to meet Amerindians on their own terms; he was a rare case study, and the lukewarm support he received is telling; mainstream Americans were not interested in viewing Indians as living people with a culture worth learning about. Most important, Catlin's writings of his experience in Indian lands and abroad demonstrate his exceptional receptivity to foreignness. Catlin did not see or market himself as a "travel-writer" but rather an artist and advocate for the Indians offering his own brand of proto-ethnography to the nineteenth-century reading public. Nevertheless, his work is an unusual addition to the travel-writing genre, and particularly productive in its presentation of how one adventurous traveler's experience of cultural difference led to cosmopolitan awareness. The extent to which one's experience of a foreign culture can be communicated to others who have not shared in those experiences is limited, and this accounts, in part, for the contradictions, defensive rationalizations, and rambling reflections present in Catlin's accounts. He faced a task that travel writers who direct their work to home-bound readers can't avoid: the unacknowledged naiveté of such readers must be dealt with, and foreignness presented in terms of the known. The psychological processes undergone by cross-cultural travelers can be significant, and are not so easily translated to the uninitiated.

Cooper recognized that cross-cultural encounters had formed American identity from the start and worked against the prevailing tendency to denigrate, dismiss, and destroy Amerindians. He noticed that efforts to encourage international acceptance of American culture as a distinctive, worthy addition to the catalog of world cultures were often hampered by cross-cultural missteps and failures. More than most, Cooper understood the process of exploring foreignness as well as the value of the experience, but found that understanding difficult to communicate to less-cosmopolitan audiences. Cooper's cross-cultural engagement is explored in two works that participated in the ongoing transatlantic squabble over the insinuations about U.S. culture in travel writing by Europeans. In Notions of the Americans (1828) and "Point de Bateaux à Vapeur—Une

Vision” (1832), Cooper advanced American arguments against the propriety and usefulness of such judgments. Homeward Bound and Home As Found (1838), took these transatlantic discussions to a different level. Remaining staunchly American, Cooper was less interested in defending his country from European “attacks” than in understanding the differences that inspired them; his argument, aimed at Americans, was for a more enlightened U.S. culture—one that had the cosmopolitan skills required to command respect internationally. Cooper’s ultimate understanding of “culture” as a moveable category of human difference in The Monikins (1835).

Fuller worked for a cosmopolitan American culture that would be able to lead the world for the sake of the progress of humanity. Americans would be simultaneously citizens of the United States and of the world. Through her engagement with other cultures, she sought to fit her own to her ideal. Hers was not a consuming globalism, but a model of international engagement from the ground up. By extending the transcendental opposition to individual conformity to the cultural scale, Fuller hoped that thinking Americans would learn to benefit from the “variety” that surrounded them. In her writing and by her example, she shifted the focus of travel from place to people, urging Americans to travel not only to see foreign places but to meet foreign people and immerse themselves in foreign points of view. She relates her impressions of Native Americans as foreigners who suffer from Americans' failure to see them as a people worthy of respectful engagement, and her desire that her country not repeat that mistake in dealing with other nations. In her first significant travel experience, which exposed her to immigrant settlers and Indian communities, she discovered her interest in learning about and forming relationships with groups of people who were different from her. As a woman she felt especially well-positioned to practice a cosmopolitanism that was its own kind of revolution.

Introduction

If we understood each other's terms better, we should not make so many blunders. When I first reached Europe I was all wonder at the ignorance of this part of the world concerning ourselves, and now that I have leisure to look about me, I am all wonder at the ignorance of America concerning Europe.

(James Fenimore Cooper to Benjamin Silliman, 6/10/31. Letters 2:99)

An Indian is a beggar in Washington City, and a white man is almost equally so in the Mandan village. An Indian in Washington is mute, is dumb and embarrassed; and so is a white man...in this place.

(George Catlin 1841:1:85-6)

Some of the lowest people have asked me, "Is it not true that your country had a war to become free?"—"Yes." "Then why do they not feel for us?"

(Margaret Fuller, SBG 283)

Experience with the foreign can be awkward. While the voices quoted above come from travelers in differing circumstances, all point to the difficulty inherent in understanding foreignness as well as the insights on cultural identity that can come with that understanding. James Fenimore Cooper, George Catlin, and Margaret Fuller all spent significant portions of their lives living outside the United States, among people who – at least initially – were foreign to them. The writing those cross-cultural forays inspired demonstrated that they learned a great deal about American culture in addition to the foreign cultures they visited, and that sometimes the insights gained were difficult to hear but impossible to refute. Being humbled can be a great learning experience, and all three writers worked hard to convince Americans not to fear the uncertainty that comes from facing a foreign culture, or the loss of face that might accompany an admission of ignorance. Failure to perform the work required for productive cross-cultural interaction had consequences. Cooper's "blunders," the result of his trust of bad information on Europe and injured pride at rumored ill-judgments of the U.S. by Europeans, transform to "wonder" at the difficulty in decoding a foreign

culture, whoever is doing the decoding; Catlin has a similar experience among the Mandans, and tries, throughout his career, to convince his readers that their negative opinions of Amerindians are the result of ignorance. Later, when a chief questions him about the wrongs inflicted upon his people by Catlin's, he is "compelled to reply in the affirmative, and quite glad to close my notebook [...] saying (though to myself and silently), that these and an hundred other vices belong to the civilized world, and are practiced upon (but certainly, in no instance, reciprocated by) the "cruel and relentless savage." (2:241-2). Catlin visits the Indians to learn about their culture, and does so—but he gets new insight into his own as well. In a comparable moment, Fuller is forced to admit a disappointing truth about the political culture (and international awareness) of the United States, which she had earlier written forces her to "stammer and blush" (SBG 165) in her conversations with Europeans. Above all, to use Cooper's terms, all three cosmopolitans hoped to reduce the number of embarrassing international "blunders" by helping Americans and foreigners better understand "each other's terms."

In this project, I explore how three antebellum Americans, set on making their mark on American culture, became advocates for a cosmopolitan approach not only to travel but also to identity. Each felt the slipperiness of American cultural identity and determined that the most productive means of securing it was by active cosmopolitan engagement with foreign others. Travel, to them, was a means not only of "seeing" the world but of learning from the ways of its inhabitants; it brought self-improvement via an understanding of the ways individuals are shaped by their own cultural backgrounds. Awareness of how one's own "cultural baggage" shapes perceptions of foreigners allows one to become a cultural broker, to think critically about one's own behavior and attitudes, and form new ideas about the world. American identity has always been a moving target, a fact which has generated anxiety consistently among Americans worried over exactly what their nationality meant and would mean. The cosmopolitans in this project were actively engaged in addressing these concerns, and sought to promote an inter-culturally sensitive

approach to domestic and international issues; this, they felt, was the path that would allow the U.S. to achieve its ideals. They advocated a hands-on, open-minded, and emotionally committed approach to foreign engagement, for the sake of the foreigners involved, and because that practice was the one that would allow Americans to turn their lack of a longstanding, cohesive cultural narrative into an advantage. What was the culture that bound together citizens of the United States? What made Americans different from the English, the French, the Irish, the Sioux? These Americans believed it should be a commitment to cosmopolitanism, enlisted to forward their nation's founding ideals. Even though too many of their fellow citizens found threatening, prohibitively difficult or frivolous what they found so enlightening, they persisted in their practice and advocacy of American cosmopolitanism.

This project explores how travel experiences led certain antebellum writers to view culture as a moveable category, and as a result, to work proactively to encourage a culture of patriotic cosmopolitanism in the United States. That cosmopolitanism placed a high value on cross-cultural exchange and so an appreciation of diversity and adaptability. The cosmopolitanism espoused by George Catlin, James Fenimore Cooper, and Margaret Fuller arose from their thoughtful engagement with foreignness; each placed themselves in situations that required them to mediate between cultures. In moving between American and foreign cultures, and translating their experience to audiences from each group, they acted as cultural brokers. Finding this brokerage empowering, they encouraged the adoption of the cosmopolitan attitude that enabled it as part of American cultural identity. Having learned what exposure to different cultures can teach one about the world and one's place in it, they hoped that the U.S. could gain strength from its ability to learn from diversity and cultivate a mind set that would not fear but seek to understand the unknown.

The cosmopolitanism of these writers was remarkable both for its timing and its kind. In the decades preceding the Civil War, while Fuller, Cooper, and Catlin lived and wrote, the United States was marked by an isolating insistence on exceptionalism that dominated American culture,

with manifestations ranging from the nationalism of the Young America movement to Emersonian transcendentalism to Know-Nothing nativism. Calls for transformative, active, or personal engagement with foreign cultures were rare. That these three writers engaged with Amerindian cultures as well as European ones further sets them apart. The approach I take to the authors and texts in this project has its origins in philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah's definition of cosmopolitanism as belief in the "value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance" (Cosmopolitanism xv). By juxtaposing Appiah's approach with the cultural analysis of such critics as William W. Stowe and Mark Renella on travel and nineteenth-century American culture, and Larry J. Reynolds and Michael Paul Rogin, on political issues of the same era, I come at Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller from an enlightening perspective. My work is complemented and complicated by the work of several other scholars, who have over the years written related studies of individual authors and texts, the biographers of Cooper and Fuller, and the family letters of George Catlin (of whom a comprehensive biography has yet to appear).

While there is a group of writers from the late nineteenth century through the First World War known for their international approach to life and art, those writers had precursors who not only came before but traveled and lived abroad when conditions for doing so were more difficult and the domestic climate less receptive. Students of American literary history generally locate cosmopolitanism in the early twentieth century, when the penchant of Americans to travel to Europe that exploded in popularity after the Civil War (more on this below) culminated in a significant number of American cultural figures transplanting themselves in a European scene [1]. The cosmopolitanism of those expatriate writers, from Henry James to Ezra Pound, though, was largely aesthetic and supranational, transcending nationality to operate in a belletristic and exclusive realm of high culture; according to these modern cosmopolitans, nationality constrained art. The antebellum writers I will discuss here, on the other hand, identified their cosmopolitanism

as American. They were different from the later expatriates as they clung firmly to their American identity while respectfully engaging with foreignness, and advised their fellow Americans to emulate their example and, even when not traveling, to learn from the experiences of foreign cultures. Their cosmopolitan engagement was decidedly *not* limited to their art but brought the desire to learn from all sorts of people. In their “patriotic” cosmopolitanism, they hoped the United States could move beyond its insular, even xenophobic tendencies to play its part in a community of nations, believing that such cosmopolitanism would make Americans stronger and better. Their engagement with foreignness was not limited to artistic production but sought to permeate all aspects of American culture, from politics to everyday behavior.

George Catlin, James Fenimore Cooper, and Margaret Fuller were dissimilar in many ways, but all enacted a cosmopolitanism that was unusual for their time and striking in its opposition to nationalist cultural currents. These traveling writers gleaned insights into cultural identity from contact with foreigners; in their lives and work within and beyond American borders, they exemplified the cosmopolitan spirit in viewing cultural difference not as a threat or an impenetrable barrier but as an opportunity for individual, political and economic development. Their careers were defined by travel experiences marked by challenges to their cultural identity, and they met these with self-reflection that led to their awareness of the treatment cultural others received from Americans. They emerged with a mission to preach a cosmopolitan consciousness to their countrymen—to model the best ways for Americans to comport themselves while acting as citizen diplomats, expressing their version of American-ness to the foreigners they met, and learning from the ways of those foreigners. While their attitudes set them apart, they were still products of their nation, and their era; without abandoning their hope of American exceptionalism, they protested isolationist tendencies and the unethical policies they created. They hoped that a progressive, cross-culturally informed cosmopolitanism could be one of the things that made American culture exceptional.

Learning how foreigners viewed the U.S., Cooper, Catlin, and Fuller believed there would be consequences - missed opportunities, and dangers - if Americans persisted in their isolationist notions and ambivalence about intercultural exchange. Responding with curiosity to foreigners abroad and domestically, these writers linked the practice of self-culture with the shaping of national culture. Facing a world of skeptical, ambitious, tumultuous, and revolutionary nations, and itself composed of diverse groups who competed for influence and privilege, the United States desperately needed to learn to negotiate cultural difference. These nineteenth-century American writer-travelers accepted and valued that neither the world nor their nation was a homogeneous place, and hoped that the productive and enriching international exchange cosmopolitanism made possible could enable strength in multiculturalism and even come to characterize American culture. The growing emphasis on culture as the vector of human difference can be demonstrated by finding American writers who described intercultural encounters with Native Americans and Europeans in similar terms, and the writers I address here engaged in life and/or art with both groups. When these writers worked to understand and then temporarily or permanently adopt certain linguistic, philosophical or behavioral aspects of a foreign culture, they argued for such cultural flexibility to become a defining characteristic of American national identity.

I label Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller as practitioners of a progressive form of cosmopolitanism that was both ethical and patriotic, and that extended both to foreign nationals and Amerindians, and I claim that, in that, they were iconoclastic. All purposefully used travel experiences to develop a cosmopolitan American identity, and hoped, through their writing, to steer their nation towards a more culturally aware and internationally-engaged stance. Their experience living as foreigners led them to question the treatment that foreigners received in the U.S., beginning with the way that Amerindians were denied their humanity. All saw the value in studying humanity in what Fuller called its “variety of forms” (Dispatches 245) and Catlin its “strange medley” (Adventures 2:306) and all understood the costs of refusing to look beyond one's known world. Understanding and

even sharing national anxieties about American cultural identity they felt that American artists should be engaged simultaneously with the international world and issues of domestic interest, acting as the best representatives of the latter to the former.

The question of what being American entails has long remained a thorny one in the U.S.. Many members of the first generations of American writers were conscious of their role in establishing an American cultural legacy. In the nineteenth century, the easiest markers of difference between the U.S. and other countries – beyond the republican government – were absences: no aristocracy, no great monuments, no long history. To the non-traveling citizen, this was not often a problem; but, like any travelers, Americans who found themselves surrounded by foreigners practicing an established culture of their own could find the experience disorienting. Xenophobia has always had a strong presence in American culture. We tend to emphasize the *e pluribus unum* narratives of pilgrims breaking bread with Indians and scrappy immigrants going from rags to riches in melting pot, but all too often reality paints a darker picture of a country where the pressure to be “mainstream” is strong and difference is suspect. The belief in American exceptionalism has deep roots; patriotism has often been defined not merely by pride of country but also by the conviction that our country is better than others. One needs only to listen to the way foreign systems are raised as bogeymen by opponents of modern health care reform to see that questioning the assertion that good things don't originate “only in America” is not uncommonly viewed as unpatriotic. President Obama was criticized for his attempt to respect Japanese etiquette when visiting the Imperial Palace; President G. W. Bush for taking a Saudi Prince by the hand. Both men, in incidents that provoked negative blasts of media attention, were involved in a kind of culturally-sensitive diplomacy wherein they showed respect for foreign counterparts by attempting to follow the practices of another culture—practices about which, no doubt, they had been by advised by culturally-informed consultants. The controversy stemmed, of course, from the fact that the practices involved (here, bowing and hand-holding) were decidedly *not* things American men

typically do, and therefore seemed to place suspicion on the Presidents' American-ness.

Discussion about who is and isn't a “real” American – and about what such Americans should think and do – has always had a role in American discourse. It has often seemed easier to specify what American is not, leading Americans to erect walls separating themselves from those who seem different. Interest in and distrust of foreigners within and beyond the borders of the United States ebbs and flows. In the nation's early years, Americans were particularly self-conscious about the meaning of their American-ness, and about the reputation that American-ness assigned to them in the eyes of the world. As Cooper pointed out when, upon her return to the U.S., so many friends ask his cosmopolitan character Eve Effingham “Are you reconciled to your country?” (HaF 15), Americans have seemed unusually prone to defensiveness about their cultural identity. To be American was to be a novelty, and the nation imagined itself under international scrutiny, keeping close eyes on foreign military movements in the western hemisphere, paying close attention to most anything Europeans expressed about the U.S.. Without tradition to fall back on, Americans felt the urgency of being proactive in creating a cultural identity for themselves. If not, that work could be done by foreigners, whose cultures were known, established “civilizations,” or by an as-feared process of lowest-common-denomination, which could occur if the least-educated and least-thoughtful of the American masses (who were beginning to look more and more “foreign”) were allowed to develop unchecked. As we shall see, Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller hoped that cosmopolitanism could become an American trait that enriched and differentiated the cultural identity of the U.S. while enabling the nation's international success.

Most simply, “cosmopolitan” means “world citizen,” but that definition is so vague, and has so many possible meanings, that I must further define the kind of cosmopolitanism I explore here. First, what I am not talking about: some versions of cosmopolitanism imply detachment from one's fellow human beings and from one's nation of origin. This cosmopolitanism focuses on the individual, who may perceive himself as living in a world of his own and bearing no responsibility

except to his own personal development (or art). These cosmopolitans may be artists, adventurers, capitalists or pleasure seekers; whatever their goals, they are centered on their own careers rather than on engagement with the communities in which they operate. Philosophers concerned with the role of the individual on society and with intercultural exchange, however, fear that if one is at home everywhere, then, perhaps, one is at home no where, and so may lack concern for the fate of any particular place, as if one's cosmopolitan accomplishments (or personal interests) excuse one from the responsibilities of citizenship. This is the kind of thinking that led Melville to term the titular character in his Confidence-Man (1857) – a devilishly protean figure able to get along with anyone and so dangerous to everyone - “the Cosmopolitan.” A similar critique points to the aloofness arising from the fact that the benefits of such worldliness are accessible only to the select few who can fund them; the privileged cosmopolitan may not be concerned with the effects of his behavior on the people he encounters on his travels. This is the kind of cosmopolitanism, I suppose, referred to by the popular magazine, or, as Bruce Michelson imagines, practiced by “pampered fashionistas, swaggering through photo shoots on some sugar-candy beach where dowdy indigenous people are not allowed to intrude” (64). Such practice is precluded by the cosmopolitanism discussed in this project.

Growing awareness of the realities of “globalization” has renewed discussion of the meanings and implications of cosmopolitanism in recent years. The personal and political diplomatic philosophy that Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller advocated is very similar to that articulated by Appiah, most explicitly in Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers (2005). Appiah's definition of cosmopolitanism is useful for its articulation of the obstacles created by cultural difference as well as techniques for moving beyond them. This from his introductory chapter expresses the cosmopolitan rationale for bothering with foreignness, even if we seem insulated from it in our daily lives:

there are two strands that intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism. One is the idea

that we have obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related...The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance. People are different, the cosmopolitan knows, and there is much to learn from our differences. (xv)

This definition of cosmopolitanism makes it a moral duty that comes with benefits. Taking the time to understand rather than dismiss, ignore or try to impose change upon difference comes at a cost but brings rewards in what the cosmopolitan learns about his or her own culture; trying to understand a foreign culture is a very good way to see how your own culture creates you.

Appiah's cosmopolitanism is not new; the ethical responsibilities inherent in acting as a “world citizen” are rooted in the Stoics' early development of the idea (Brock and Brighouse 2). More recently, David Held has offered eight “principles of cosmopolitan order” that declare that “the ultimate units of moral concern are individual human beings” (12). Articulated principles “set down the fundamental organization of the cosmopolitan moral universe,” and “translate individual activity to public power” (15). They are also useful in emphasizing the differences between “world citizens” and the “worldly.” Appiah, too, acknowledges this “worldly” cosmopolitanism, offering as examples travelers like Sir Richard Burton (without question a practitioner of the detached cosmopolitanism described above), who displayed a remarkable level of cross-cultural facility but didn't hesitate to express his contempt for entire nationalities, or even to buy slaves if he found it convenient (2005 8). The examples of detached cosmopolitanism offered by Michelson and Appiah are extreme; varieties of cosmopolitanism are nuanced and each practitioner is unique. But it is important to distinguish between the kind of cosmopolitanism liberal theorists discuss today – which resembles that I find in the antebellum writers here – and other kinds, which lead to different kinds of engagement with foreignness. Worldly cosmopolitanism requires social and economic privilege, and not necessarily any meaningful contact with foreigners (where “meaningful” is a

clumsy way of excluding the contact one must get from employing drivers, waiters, and the like without getting to know them as individuals). More engaged cosmopolitanism happens when people attempt to understand those different from themselves, and use cross-cultural experience to reflect on their own habits, attitudes, and world view.

The American cosmopolitans exemplified by Henry James, Mark Twain and their colleagues and successors were engaged deeply with foreign art as well as the lifestyle accessible to them while living abroad. In her introduction to Cosmopolitan Twain (2008), Ann Ryan has defined Twain as cosmopolitan because he is “competitive, skeptical, necessarily tolerant, passionately secular, multilingual and multicultural, frankly materialistic and acquisitive” (4). Travel is enjoyable as adventure and useful as a source of creative materials; Twain enjoyed the status he got as a world traveler of renown. That stance was “the product of privilege,” (10) Ryan explains, and it also marked Twain's anticipation of “American modernism: the intractability of race and nation, the tyrannies of industrialism and religion, and the promise, as well as the illusion, of a transnational, transhistorical, transcendent individuality” (2). In his exploration of the travel experiences of young Samuel Clemens in the same book, Michelson points out that

if we want to talk about the modern and contemporary self as transformed, or traumatized, by encounters with international and global otherness, [...] we have to begin, with an accumulating, involuting discourse that critiques, usually from some (imaginary) loftier position, the moral and aesthetic responses of everyone else—other writers and artists, religious, cultural, and corporate big-league players on the global scene; and sometimes, if we're feeling frisky, entire nations and peoples. (68)

Michelson and Ryan point out that Twain's is a detached cosmopolitanism, in which the cosmopolitan individual rises above the territories and cultures surveyed, writing and engaging with them from the outside. This practice of cosmopolitanism grants individuals great confidence in their ability to get along anywhere, particularly in situations that would challenge most, and to

produce dazzling creative work. The cosmopolitan is more than the average, untraveled citizen, who can only wonder at his chameleon-like powers and diverse adventures. The masses might wish to emulate such a figure, but most will find him out of reach. On the contrary, Cooper, Fuller, and Catlin hoped that their writing would inspire others to follow their example and create cross-cultural experiences of their own.

In his study of Henry James and his contemporaries, Boston Cosmopolitans: International Travel and American Arts and Letters (2008) Mark Renella identifies a group of traveling artists, some of whom tried to fight this detachment by sharing their interest in foreign culture. The “Boston cosmopolitans” believed they “were intimately tied to the cultural history of Europe and the rest of the world, and that the creative options available to an artist from America should not be confined by any national boundaries” (2). Defining cosmopolitanism as “the disposition to see one’s native culture as just one branch of human culture in general” and “a worldliness that opened up a cornucopia of history’s ideas and art to the curious American mind” (2), these cosmopolitans hoped to change the insular way the majority of Americans seemed to view the world. While their initial travel, to Europe, was in part to study the art and culture housed there,

as the Cosmopolitans matured, they began to see American culture as being on an equal footing with the world’s older cultures, all of which contained their own forms of brilliance and backwardness, their own creative possibilities and their own versions of sterile “cant.” The important discovery the Cosmopolitans made was that they could admire other cultures without putting their American identity at risk and that they could be proud of their own American education and outlook without denigrating the ideas and traditions of foreign cultures. (31)

They wrote, lectured, designed, and donated with a mission to enlighten the American public to the world outside U.S. borders and create a cityscape in Boston that acknowledged its place in a wider world. Renella explains that they sought to bring foreign ideas to American shores not to replace

“native” ones, but to challenge and enrich them.

Cosmopolitanism was “a sensibility that aimed to make Americans aware of political and cultural choices that exceptionalism did not allow” (12), and in this, it went against the dominant cultural current in the United States. Renella illustrates the late nineteenth-century cosmopolitans’ break with this optimistically exceptionalist philosophy via his discussion of an auspicious but disenchanting meeting between Charles Eliot Norton [2] and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who happened to make the crossing from Liverpool to Boston on the same vessel in 1873. Honored by this unexpected chance to get to know this “lion” of American culture and flattered by the attention Emerson granted him, Norton was nonetheless struck by the older man’s failure to temper his optimism about the power of self-reliant individuals and the “perennial hope for the future” of American civilization after the bitter lessons of the Civil War (41). Although Emerson was returning from one of multiple extended tours to Europe, in Norton’s view he was a “less discerning and critical observer of the world than he might have been” (40) had he a less “innocent” or complacent trust in his own philosophy and vision of American destiny, which seemed too “purely aesthetic” (41). Norton found his experience with Emerson unsettling, and spent some time thinking of ways to change his own thinking to reflect his budding cosmopolitanism and help to shape the realities of the United States he operated in. In his career, Norton and his contemporaries sought means “to teach Americans to become more modest about themselves and less complacent about the future” (47) via knowledge of the wider world. Similarly, the writers in this project rejected and wished to counteract “innocence” such as Emerson’s, which they realized was too close to naiveté. Norton’s consciousness that, in seeking to spread his cosmopolitanism, he was trying to chart a new course for the United States marks his awareness of American cultural attitudes of his time, which had changed little since before the Civil War. As Renella puts it, “although many countries have suffered at one time or another from narrow-mindedness, American solipsism could remain particularly strong because of Americans’ belief in

the exceptional character of their nation, a belief protected and insulated by physical distance” from foreign cultures.

All too often, this “solipsism” morphs into xenophobic nationalism, as was the case with the virulent nativism of the nineteenth century. Domestic politics, of course, frequently work against cosmopolitanism. A cosmopolitan approach to immigration, for example, may lead to an influx of “the wrong kind” of voter; cosmopolitanism extended to Indians would have precluded most expansion. Peter Schrag has recently reminded us that what makes “nativism, xenophobia, and racism” significant in the United States is the fact that “they run almost directly counter to the nation’s founding ideals” (2). In his study of Americans who operated in Paris in the last two decades of the eighteenth century, Cosmopolitan Patriots (2010), Philip Ziesche has traced isolating nationalist tendencies to events in the early Republic. Appreciative of foreign aid during the Revolutionary War, inspired by their own recent nation-building and enthusiastic about their democracy being emulated abroad, some of the first American citizens felt that “cosmopolitanism and nationalism were not at odds with each other, but complementary” as Americans needed to unify a diverse population, and could do so by appealing to “universal principles;” abroad, then, Americans should work against colonial powers towards a system of sovereign states (3). Following the example and invitation of Lafayette, a group of Americans in Paris tried to work with French revolutionaries but ended up being distrusted by both French and American authorities. Others combined private enterprises with “public diplomacy,” and worked to aid American interests in Europe. In 1797, Joel Barlow and other Americans, who had acclimated to French society, sought out the emissaries sent by President Adams to stave off conflict with France, offering their ideas on matters like how best to deal with the French bureaucracy and how to conduct business at dinner parties. Envoys Marshall, Gerry, and Pinckney, however, were not interested in their ideas (116). After the XYZ affair, “American nationalism took on new characteristics, such as nativism, xenophobia, and the exaltation of American moral superiority”

(120). The Naturalization and Alien Acts of 1798 were followed by the Logan Act of 1799, which barred citizens from all unauthorized contact with agents of foreign government (133). Public diplomacy was thus outlawed, and the American cosmopolitans distrusted and humiliated [3]. Too much involvement with foreignness was risky—a fact demonstrated by the fact that plenty of the villains in early American fiction are foreign.

It may not be surprising that a young nation so concerned with asserting its identity would find citizens who appeared to wish to transcend nationality suspect. The first generation of Americans often condemned those who sought multiple citizenships or even worked for foreign employers (Ziesche 4). In the twenty-first century, plenty of theorists arguing for universal humanism assert that nationalism is the root of all conflicts and hope to usher in a “post-national” world—and plenty of people still find that attitude suspect, and perhaps too hastily dismiss liberal political theory because of it. The reality is, though, that there is a place for nationality in the cosmopolitanism described by Appiah and Held above. Nationality can be limiting, proscribing—but it need not be so. Nations have long coexisted with multiculturalism; people are able to understand themselves as owing allegiance to “differently-organized collectivities at local and more inclusive levels,” and civilization has often flourished in “polyglot and more heterogeneous empires and in cosmopolitan trading cities” (Calhoun 114). To clarify this nationality-friendly aspect of cosmopolitanism, Appiah has suggested thinking about “rooted cosmopolitanism” or “patriotic cosmopolitanism” (1998 91). This feels apt for the modern world, with its emphasis on the importance of local movements and engagement, and it was exactly the way that Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller saw their own internationalism. Cosmopolitanism would allow Americans to be true to their own founding ideals, the ideals which they meant to embody. Appiah explains that “the cosmopolitan patriot can entertain the possibility of a world in which *everyone* is a rooted cosmopolitan, attached to a home of his or her own, with its own cultural particularities, but taking pleasure from the presence of other, different, places that are home to other, different people;” (91)

in the chapters that follow, I show that these writers believed that along with the “pleasure” cosmopolitan exchange could bring came new understandings that could help Americans reach their potential. They did not develop a cosmopolitan lifestyle solely to serve their art, but rather employed their art to promote an American cosmopolitanism that was neither detached nor purely aesthetic. And in all three cases, rewarding as the experience was, it was work, and its mutuality brought a newfound sympathy with foreigners and a call for action.

Not only traveling Americans were called upon to be cosmopolitans; not all “foreigners” lived in other countries. The United States was, from its beginning (and, of course, long before that) home to human beings from different cultural backgrounds. The nation composed of and consistently in need of immigrants frequently faced newly-arrived would-be citizens with ambivalence or antipathy. In the decades preceding the Civil War, improvements in transatlantic communication, the need for labor to work on railroads and in factories, and conditions abroad combined to bring unprecedented waves of new arrivals: in the 1820s, approximately 143,000; in the 1830s, roughly 600,000; and in the 1840s, around 1.7 million; by 1855, one fifth of the population of Boston was Irish-born (Schrag 24).

By the 1830s, the reaction against these immigrants – particularly the Catholic Irish and Germans – was underway, and violence flared up, most notably in Boston (with its long history of sectarian conflict) and Philadelphia. Soon, fears about what happened behind cloistered walls became fears about the Catholic immigrants' impact on American politics, and groups like the Protestant Order of the Star Spangled Banner organized into parties like New York's “Native Americans,” which came to be labeled “Know-Nothings.” Maria Monk's Awful Disclosures (1836) which played on fears of “Popery” with its sensationalized accounts of young women and infants in danger, was among the most popular books of its time, and has been deemed “the Uncle

Tom's Cabin of the Know-Nothing movement” (Schrag 28). Know-Nothings sought to consolidate power in the hands of American-born Protestants, and won several important offices in Massachusetts as well as in Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C., and California by the 1850s. This antipathy towards “foreign influences” domestically reinvigorated the xenophobia generated by the XYZ affair. Combined with Emersonian calls for “self-reliance,” it resulted in a decidedly anti-cosmopolitan climate in the U.S. in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Acknowledging that, one finds a seeming paradox in the fact that the most popular American poet of the era was decidedly international in his tastes and impressively multicultural in choosing the subjects of his work. As did so many American writers, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow traveled to Europe, and published a book (Outre-Mer, (1835), his first) detailing the experience. In Europe he had spent time with Washington Irving, an older, successful compatriot who had published his own travelogues. Travel-writing was among the most popular genres in the U.S. (Gutjahr xvi), a fact that marked the young nation's curiosity about the world and its own international image. Foreign travelers acknowledged – and judged - the United States, and Americans wanted to reciprocate. Not surprisingly travel literature, including travelogues, guidebooks, magazine essays and newspaper columns from correspondents abroad, comprised a dominant share of the literary marketplace. Travel writing was everywhere and managed simultaneously to inflame feelings of subservience to foreign art and culture and lead to the denigration and expulsion of foreign ideas.

Interest in U.S. culture gained momentum when Europeans began writing about it. Tourists from England found that a visit to America brought not only the discomforts of travel but culture shock: things worked differently in the United States. While at first, this might have seemed like a shock to visitors and hosts alike, people on either side of the Atlantic quickly realized they were foreigners to each other. The British, with their greater wealth, infrastructure, and potential to publish, wrote first, and often didn't hesitate to point out deficiencies or poke fun at the foreigners

who had been colonists. Proud Americans cried foul. In the archives of Harvard University, boxes of student notebooks document the writing assignments of rhetoric students in 1824. One posed the question, “How should the calumnies of British travelers and journalists with respect to this country be regarded and treated by us?” Student W. H. Fowler began his response, which is in line with those of his classmates, with a motto adapted from Hamlet. “Use men to your own honor and dignity,” he wrote, suggesting that Americans listen to the Bard, even if the British would not. In the body of his essay, Fowler went on to ask, “Do three thousand miles make such a difference in intellect? [shall we] repay evil for evil? No! We will take a more honorable part” (not paginated).

Through the 1820s and beyond, Americans complained of travel writing they referred to as “the calumnies” published by foreign visitors to the States. Fowler's assignment was likely composed in response to one of the many angry reviews of the calumnies that appeared in American newspapers, the most infamous were those written by Colonel Hamilton, Basil Hall, and Frances Trollope. Not only were these writings seen as personally offensive to the American people, they were also read by some as political instruments of European reactionaries hoping to undermine American democracy. To provide a sampling of the countless responses published to the travel writing controversy in American papers, two representative editorial commentaries follow. The first is a typical angry voice: the near hysterical reaction to the “traveling spies” penned by a columnist for The United States Magazine after several decades of amassed “calumnies:”

Abuse or slander is sure to provoke retaliation, and in this manner nations become insensibly alienated from one another, not so much by an opposition of interests, or a collision of conflicting claims, as from the fact of their having long been engaged in a war of words, which has at length resulted in a settled, inveterate antipathy, rankling in the hearts of an entire people, and manifesting itself by a series of insults and injuries. [...]

They do not write because of their peevish recollection of the bad roads, bad

dinners, scarcity of towels and wash-hand basins, putting knives in our mouths in steamboats, as Mr. Dickens complains; eating mustard at breakfast, as Colonel Hamilton alleges, or expectorating irreverently, as all British travelers unite in affirming. We know it is in pursuance of a settled aim and settled policy, that of rendering our morals, our institutions, and our government, detestable and ignominious in the eyes of the world.

(“British Critics and British Travellers”)

The author does not distinguish foreigners' observations about everyday habits from their attitudes about the worthiness the United States as a nation. He also notes that careless insensitivity can lead to serious conflicts. He knows that travelers travel to judge, and is incensed because he feels these travelers have been judging unfairly. Most egregiously, the “calumniating” travel writers are using cultural differences – and the general lack of a cosmopolitan understanding of the same – as a weapon in international politics.

Some called for a calmer reception of the foreign travel writers, though they were far fewer in number and less strident in rhetoric than those who took offense. This minority, though they never defended the travel writers, seemed to realize that the “thin-skinned” reaction of the American public risked vindicating the writers who called Americans unsophisticated. Some tried to call attention to largely overlooked travel writing that seemed less critical of the United States; others suggested that the travelers’ complaints were trivial and might be valid for the present but would soon be baseless. A typical measured response to the calumnies follows: Americans who are upset by the perceived aspersions of travel writers

By the most absurd and ridiculous display of anger, [have] more than once given celebrity to dunces, and been himself the means of perpetuating falsehoods which would otherwise have dropped quietly into oblivion. [...] It is a wonder to behold a great country, whose soldiers, statesmen, and philosophers have commanded the admiration of every people; [...] whose citizens are respected in every climate; whose flag waves upon every

sea;--it is strange to behold such a nation writhing beneath the lash of some obscure individual [...] How long will this strange madness last? When will this fever terminate? When will our exquisite nerves be able to bear the breath of the wandering zephyr? (“Men and Manners”)

Here is a more careful and honest response, not, really, to the foreign travel writers, but to those Americans they have infuriated. Travel writers are “obscure” “wandering zephyrs,” and their work, were it not for the piles of published reactions, would be destined for “oblivion.”

The most common aspects of American life that European writers ridiculed were the scarcity of physical comforts in the U.S. and the comportment of American citizens; the examples cited by the first writer above were common. The writers reported what Americans ate, how they kept up their infrastructure or entertained strangers or dressed themselves, what they talked about and with whom, in what fashion they worshiped—in sum, they described American culture. The comments rankled because they suggested that culture fell short of European standards. The underlying question, it seemed, was “what do all of these things reveal about American values – and the value of Americans?” The idea that such traveler’s reports could become the foundation of foreign (and even domestic) perceptions of American cultural identity horrified Americans [4].

When it came to travel writing, however, controversy fed popularity, and books and articles containing such accounts were increasingly abundant. The authors were Americans of all kinds: men and women rich and poor, even slaves and former slaves; in the words of William W. Stowe, “they produced a few memorable texts and a large number of very similar accounts of nearly identical trips containing predictable comments on predictable sights and experiences” (5). Though expensive and uncomfortable, travel for its own sake was beginning to be a possibility (the first passenger steamship operation was established in 1838). Still, before the 1860s, transatlantic communication was unreliable, dangerous, and uncomfortable, not to mention expensive. In 1850, first-class fare from the U.S. to England approximated \$120; the average annual family income in

Massachusetts was \$763 (Renella 18). Travel was a way to demonstrate one's courage and resourcefulness. On the reasons for so many travelers and consumers of travel writing, Stowe continues:

Claiming a tradition and espousing a style of living were also ways of defining oneself and the social group to which one belonged. For traveler after traveler [...] Europe served as a stage for self-definition, for establishing personal relations with culture and society that did not necessarily fit the conventional practices prescribed by hometown and family standards. In addition, European travel was a way of affirming the respectability of one's race, class, or gender. (5)

Stowe is clearly onto something here; one reason for the “similar accounts of nearly identical trips” was that those were a way to claim American-ness regardless of the writer's social position. In the early days of American travel, however, the adventure, for Americans, was also a way of “affirming the respectability” of one's *nationality*. And, perhaps more important, of figuring out exactly what that nationality meant [5].

Notwithstanding the appeal of European travel, Longfellow received a good share of criticism for his work in translation and his adoption of European forms [6]. His poems were well-loved by the American people, though, even when they featured protagonists from unpopular groups: the heroine of “Evangeline” was a Catholic, the subject of “The Song of Hiawatha,” Iroquois. Longfellow's cosmopolitanism, however, was confined to the aesthetic realm. Like the later cosmopolitans Renella described, he believed that art – including his – was universal. As Agnieszka Salska has recently articulated, Longfellow retreated from “the immediate cultural concerns of his country to commune with the supranational ideal of art.” That is, Salska argues, that Longfellow gave up on writing “American” literature in favor of a universalist approach. His poem about a young Catholic woman could be popular because it was fictional and ignored the young Catholic women working in Boston laundries and raising families of new voters; his sympathetic

poem about an Indian was uncontroversial because it was about one who happily welcomes white missionaries and promptly disappears, ignoring the Indian conflicts happening in the real world.

Those centuries-old and ongoing conflicts, with the nativist movements described above, formed the historical background upon which nineteenth-century American cultural identity was written, and the intersection of those two realities helped launch the cosmopolitanism of the writers here. Both mistrust of immigrants and the events of Indian removal pointed to conflicts generated from cultural difference. Native Americans remained in and around American territory; they had an even greater presence in the American imaginations, as witnessed by Longfellow's famous work. The very non-imaginary policies being enacted and enforced throughout the nineteenth century meant that Amerindians loomed large in conversations about American society and culture. Central to the debates about what to do about the presence of Indians in lands coveted by the U.S. was the level of Indian "civilization." National identity is in part place-based, and so the United States was marked by its original inhabitants. Throughout the nineteenth century, Native Americans were violently removed from their homes, resulting in loss on a genocidal scale. Their treatment by the U.S. Government was controversial, but intellectual debate about Indians too often was framed as strictly theoretical, erasing the presence of actual Indians in America. Cosmopolitanism meant seeing Indians as having a culture of their own, of the same value as that of the settlers who displaced them. This was a major turnaround from the way most in the U.S. thought about Native Americans.

Appropriately, Native Americans have as notable a presence in literary scholarship as they do in literature. When nineteenth-century white Americans did think about Indians, they didn't think of them as fellow citizens, but they didn't quite think of them as "foreigners," either. Indians were a defining aspect of the American experience. They played real and imaginative roles in defining historical events from the Salem witch hysteria to the Boston Tea Party, leaving an indelible imprint on the American collective psyche. Paradoxically, they were simultaneously

noble benefactors, bequeathers of a land of unparalleled richness, dull savages, and victims of genocidal greed. Philip J. Deloria has expressed the tangled relationship of Indians to American identity: “The indeterminacy of American identities stems, in part, from the nation's inability to deal with Indian people. Americans wanted to feel a natural affinity with the continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape they had to control the original inhabitants” (5). Americans who tried to understand Indians – to “deal with” them as they were – were few and far between, but Catlin, Cooper and Fuller each made the effort to do just that.

Most eastern Americans in the first half of the century did not see Indians as a part of their lives, but as curiosities left over from a bygone era. According to the theory first developed by Richard Slotkin in Regeneration Through Violence (1973), European settlers very quickly cast Amerindians in mythical roles that rendered the fact of their living and breathing in the spaces the settlers who encountered them wished to occupy inconvenient—sometimes dangerously so. Still, the Indians were cast as children of nature, destined to disappear from lands marked as the promised land for a greater civilization. Casualties left behind by the march of progress, Indians served as markers of the wildness and depth of American natural resources, but their “civilization” was doomed by its failure to “advance.” They made interesting figures in art and literature and provided a rich mine of symbols for organizations to gather around. In reality, though, as Michael Paul Rogin argued in 1973, the expansion of the U.S. and continual extinction of Indian tribes was the “central fact” of American politics before the Civil War (3). Thinking about Indians required trying to “reconcile the destruction of the Indians with the American self-image” (4).

Americans were aware that the ongoing treatment of the Indian peoples was a potential liability in the eyes of the world. As Margaret Fuller proclaimed in Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845), “I need not speak of what has been done towards the red man, the black man. Those deeds are the scoff of the world” (253). Since the United States lacked the historical

monuments and cultural traditions that shored up great European cities, Americans tended to argue that instead, the new nation was nurtured by unspoiled nature, alternately depicted as mettlesome wilderness and God-infused “creation.” But while the claim that their country was a blank slate was comfortingly liberating, when they looked at their past and present realities, Americans knew that the new world had been inhabited, and if they *really* looked – with cosmopolitan eyes – then they knew that it held a civilization as culturally rich and diverse as that in the old. As a result, they generally chose not to look. The horror and guilt from a history of Indian violence and mistreatment lingered in American nightmares, and remained a problem in Indian-white relations.

While books like Catharine Maria Sedgwick's Hope Leslie or Lydia Maria Child's Hobomok were popular, they located Indians, in Americans' minds, squarely in the past. The intersection of nativism and Indian removal at a time when citizens of the United States were beginning to travel more and more leads me to explore how experiencing travel among various foreign cultures impacted the construction of American culture. More specifically, I wonder how writer-travelers who engaged with the two different “others” that took up so much space in the news – Europeans and Native Americans – may have come to see culture differently as a result, and offered versions of performing Americanness that differed from those of the mainstream. If American culture was (and remains) difficult to define, how did Americans who thoughtfully faced the experience of foreignness seek to make use of the experience? How did the shift in perspective that comes from adapting to foreign ways affect how these writers worked to construct a distinctly American culture?

Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller entered into conversations, literal and metaphorical, with cultures foreign to them. More importantly, they sought to propagate those conversations as producers in the literary marketplace. While all of them, in various ways and to varying degrees, believed in the potential of American exceptionalism, they also believed that Americans had to be *in* the world in order to lead it. They sensed the looseness of American cultural identity and

realized that that could translate into cosmopolitan self-correction. If Americans ignored the world beyond their borders they risked stagnation and embarrassment. All three writers traveled much more than the average American of their time, and all of them spent a significant amount of time living in a foreign environment and so adapted to foreign language and culture in ways that went beyond the experience of the tourist. Their cosmopolitan engagement included but was not limited to the appreciation of foreign art. All offered “travel writing” to a public that hungered for it, but in ways that distinguished their offerings from the countless others available; they insisted in that writing that travel was more than a passive pleasure and that learning about foreignness, wherever it is encountered, was work. That work is a key element of their cosmopolitanism and what they hoped the citizens of the United States would have courage enough to undertake.

Cross-cultural learning brings significant challenges. First and foremost, there is often (and was in most of the cases I will examine) a language barrier to overcome. Not only does this limit the number of individuals with whom one can successfully interact, but it also means one likely will miss the untranslatable elements of a conversation, from idiomatic expressions to the usage of formal distinctions not employed in English. Even when the speaker has studied a foreign language and achieved mastery of vocabulary and grammar, there is much to be learned about how those building blocks are used among native speakers. Walter Benjamin observed that “fidelity in translation of individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original” (21). Certainly, a study of a language from texts and tutors might enable a tourist to master the interactions necessary to maneuver in the public sphere, such as asking directions or ordering food. But in exchanges of greater complexity, meaning becomes more and more tied to idiomatic expressions and usages that are often not available or up-to-date when learned abroad. Really learning about foreign ways requires really learning the languages they are expressed in, and in most cases that involves a significant investment of energy and time. Although their ultimate

levels of proficiency vary, all of the writers in this project spent years in foreign milieus where English (which, for all, was the single native tongue) was not dominant, and worked carefully on their language abilities. Most importantly, all recognized the critical nature of those abilities to their cross-cultural mission. Fuller was fluent in Italian and French and translated German texts; Cooper studied Italian and German and mastered French enough to publish in that language in Paris. Catlin, whose education was less formalized, grew up in an area with a history of Indian conflict and worked to study the languages he acquired while living among various tribes, including Mandan, Blackfoot, Sioux, and French. He carefully kept glossaries in several languages and could be scathingly critical of published “Indian lexicons.”

In living abroad and acting as representative Americans, Catlin, Cooper and Fuller were cultural brokers, moving between groups foreign to each other, using elements of both cultures to get along and express themselves. Acting as intermediaries, culture brokers move between separate cultures and in so doing come to examine each keenly. Brokerage brings advantages ranging from survival to adventure to success; if it did not, very few individuals would engage in the work and discomfort it requires. In moving between cultures, brokers experience moments of liminality, when, in the disorientation felt upon landing in a foreign environment, they are, according to Victor Turner, “pushed towards invisibility” (26). Their vulnerable and humbled state grants them a freeing “sacred power” from which “novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar elements” (27). The elements might range from fashion to religion to manners to family dynamics – all of the things that comprise a culture. Margaret Connell Szasz, who had studied Native American culture brokers extensively, notes that while brokerage can take many paths and come in many forms, there are traits that mark individuals able to mediate successfully between multiple cultures: curiosity, enthusiasm, receptiveness, determination, ambition, and trustworthiness (295); she also states that cultural brokerage comes with benefits (potential for profit, sense of power, personal satisfaction) as well as disadvantages (social isolation, potential for awkward or

even dangerous situations) (298).

The U.S. Peace Corps, an institution that tries to embrace cosmopolitanism, spends a significant amount of time educating its thousands of volunteers about what they will undergo in living in a foreign culture. A manual given to all new volunteers seeks to preempt the responses of the writers and readers of the nineteenth-century columnies, beginning with the statement that “Cross-cultural exposure is not cross-cultural knowledge. Having an experience...does not necessarily mean understanding it” (Storti 1). The book, entitled Culture Matters, is less a guide to foreign cultures than it is a guide to understanding one's response to them. The primary message is that volunteers need to understand “the silent language of cultures” --their own as much as those of the nations where they have been placed--since “people *from* a culture...are in many ways the least able to see it” (37). The book lists the stages that cross-cultural travelers experience: in learning to operate in a foreign culture, volunteers can expect a honeymoon period of enthusiasm followed by cycles of “shock” and increasing adjustment (191). Perhaps more helpful in analyzing the adjustment level of a cross-cultural traveler from the outside (as I must do in analyzing the work of nineteenth-century writers) are the “levels of cultural awareness” (199), which go from unconscious incompetence, to conscious incompetence, to conscious then unconscious competence. The language of Culture Matters is modern, but the explanation of what brokers undergo as they cross foreign cultures is useful. In the nineteenth century, peevish complaints about rude behaviors, bad food, and poor facilities could all be symptoms of what even the government (or at least one government-funded organization) now understands to be culture shock or “unconscious incompetence.” If endured properly, culture shock can lead to new understanding, as when Catlin gets over his revulsion and participates in a “dog feast,” or when Fuller puts her dislike for the Catholic Church aside to arrange her son's sacrament of baptism, or when Cooper admits he went too far in praising American ways at the expense of foreign ones ((1/18/1843, 4:344 to Rufus Grisworld). Cosmopolitans notice, gratified, when their “culture shock” is overcome.

The antebellum writers I examine here hoped to use their cosmopolitan experiences to influence American culture and U.S. policy. Each case is different, as each writer had different interests, goals and experiences, and the works they produced are, accordingly, very different as well. Each reflected on the experience of travel in a foreign culture in way that demonstrates their understanding of culture-crossing and how that experience should best be processed. All three commented pointedly on the type of person best suited for travel and the reasons that others might be best advised to stay at home. They each also thought and wrote about the writing of travel, how it should be read, and the dangers faced by travelers who attempt to write their cultural brokerage; uninitiated readers may not be receptive.

George Catlin's primary cross-cultural exploration was among Native Americans living in tribal environments outside the reach of mainstream American society. In his first major book, he set out to depict the cultures of the groups of Indians he visited in the western half of the U.S., and in his second, his experiences traveling with his exhibition and a group of Amerindians in Europe. Regardless of his stated subject, though, Catlin is the star of both books, and his increasing awareness of the dynamics of intercultural learning is among their most important themes. In his first book, he casts himself not as a tourist but as a traveling learner, eager observer and sympathetic friend. His goal was to be "immersed in the Indian country, mingling with red men, and identifying [him]self with them as much as possible" (3) so that he could learn as much as possible of their culture. As a result, his text carries an unusual depth of insights on the process a cosmopolitan traveler must undergo not only in experiencing and learning a foreign culture, but in communicating that foreignness to an audience of readers. The differences between Amerindian cultures and Catlin's own are great, and he is forced to come to terms with moments of real disorientation, to make sense of things insensible, and to find a way to live with perceived moral breaches. For all its colorful anecdotes and vivid sketches of frontier adventures, Catlin's prose can be deeply reflective, not only about the experience of travel and the need to respect difference, but

also about the experience of travel-writing, or sharing one's cosmopolitanism with one's culturally-bound fellow citizens.

In Catlin's second book, his cross-cultural engagement takes on new dimensions as he simultaneously adjusts to life in Europe and translates American Indian culture to foreign audiences, but he spends plenty of time translating American culture too. A significant measure of his text is spent, as in his previous book, in correcting the misconceptions and illuminating the ignorance of whites on the subject of Native Americans, and much space is given, too, to the Natives' criticisms of "civilized" life. Catlin even (briefly) tries his hand at "playing Indian" as a means of easing himself into English society. The intersections of complicated cultural identities – delineated by Catlin as Indian, American, and European – are fascinating throughout the book, but as in the earlier text, I find paying attention to Catlin's narrative voice most productive. Again, he must work to negotiate his American audience's sensitivities and try to ease them into an understanding of cultural difference. At the same time, he has another platform on which to judge and criticize his compatriots' behavior—in particular, the way their ignorance of foreign subjects causes problems for themselves and others. He is observant of his fellow Americans in Europe and often finds their conduct embarrassing (if entertaining). Catlin so participates in the transatlantic debate on travel-writing, carrying the weight of an unusually-seasoned cosmopolitan into the fray. Critics (Christopher Mulvey and Kate Flint will be referenced in the next chapter) have largely read Catlin's second book for its descriptions of the Indians' response to Europe and vice versa; his first book has been largely overlooked. But I find Catlin's texts, with their rich depictions of cross-cultural life and of his own cosmopolitan development add a unique voice to the body of nineteenth-century travel writing, and form an indispensable component to the era's debates on American identity. His is a call against American isolation and for positive intercultural engagement. Catlin was willing to learn from Amerindians, and tried to use the insights about cross-cultural exchange he gained from the process to help Americans get along with foreigners,

and simply to help Americans get along.

James Fenimore Cooper has been a writer best known for his Indians, and the “Leatherstocking” novels have rightly been discussed for their sophisticated presentation of interacting cultures in the colonies and the early Republic. Cooper's interest in Native Americans and their place in American culture was early and longstanding. As Barbara Mann has argued, his depictions of Amerindians and of Indian-white cultural dynamics are more nuanced and historically astute than many readers have assumed. In addition, he was among the literary figures of his time most involved in the intercultural aspects of the travel-writing controversies, as well; in fact, the vast majority of his work deals with interactions between people of different cultural backgrounds. He frequently wrote about Americans' relationships with Europeans at home and abroad and is well known for his depictions of Amerindian characters and their place in American society; he produced volumes of work – plenty of fiction, a good amount of nonfiction, and a few books that blur the lines between the two – nearly all of which deals with either the international role of Americans or with the fact of what today is called multiculturalism. Cooper employed what he learned as an expatriate in Europe to form and write his idea of American-ness. Initially, Cooper was not above the transatlantic fray caused by finger-pointing travel-writers, and he expressed American pique at the culturally-unaware blunderings of European visitors to the U.S. in both Notions of the Americans Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor (1828) and the brief essay “Point de Bateaux à Vapeur” (1832). The latter, published in French in a French periodical, is exceptional as an American response, answering the traveling “calumniators” not only by pointing out the inaccuracies in their reporting but also doing so by demonstrating his own achievement in learning the culture of the place he is visiting. Cooper therein models an American cosmopolitanism that can serve national interests in the international arena. Travelers should respect the customs of the lands in which they travel, and not be surprised when those customs are unfamiliar; difference does not equal inferiority; productive travel is more than movement; foreign ideas are worth trying on, if

only in the liminal space of a journey.

In other works, Cooper's thinking about American cultural identity and the way that determines cross-cultural exchanges addressed more than the back-and-forth slings and arrows of insensitive tourists. In Homeward Bound and Home as Found (1838), he points out the problem of American identity both at home and abroad: Americans must work to understand foreigners and be understood by them, and they must also work to understand that American culture itself is a contested, unstable quantity. Cooper believed that Americans could learn from foreign cultures; the United States was a revision rather than a reinvention of human culture. He knew that the skills Americans gained through cross-cultural learning would better position them to enact their global destiny. His cosmopolitan approach was not popular or well understood, and Cooper continued to push against the mainstream and write works that addressed the question of how Americans should live in a multicultural world.

Margaret Fuller's idealistic and patriotic cosmopolitanism meant that she took seriously her mission to work as an American for all humanity. Domestically, Fuller worked to increase Americans' knowledge not only of foreign cultural production but, more importantly, of the means by which they could explore those cultures on their own. By promoting the study of foreign languages and a philosophical approach to cross-cultural travel, she hoped to give Americans the tools they could use to make their own international exchanges and form their own opinions on the world and the proper place of the United States in it. She hoped that this would allow the nation to avoid making mistakes it had in the past—most obviously, with Native Americans. Fuller saw the injustice of Indian Removal and felt that the refusal of white Americans to see Indians as culturally different rather than “uncivilized” led to such evils; failures in cross-cultural understanding had sparked a long history of violent cultural conflict in America. Fuller worried that similar breaches were leading the U.S. into similarly unjust wars.

Fuller's belief in the importance of travel was paramount, and she felt that travel brought

benefits to both the traveler and the traveler's nation. Her transcendentalist belief in the potential of the individual meant that individuals had power to influence their society, and Fuller saw that the U.S., which lacked a stable group identity, was particularly vulnerable to this sort of guidance. Thus she sought to educate a nation of would-be travelers to do so in a carefully cosmopolitan manner. Leslie Eckel has recently argued that Fuller believed that a transnational approach would bolster American democracy. In her article "Margaret Fuller's Conversational Journalism," she writes that Fuller sought "imaginative cooperation" (28) between countries to improve the state of society around the world, and cultivated that cosmopolitan conversation in her writings on foreign authors and on "things and thoughts" abroad. But Fuller's cosmopolitanism was not limited to imaginative cooperation. Her engagement with foreigners and the concerns they faced was real and personal, and she advocated an activism that was in no way limited to artistic production. Rather, Fuller believed American culture would reach its full potential only once Americans lived up to their ideals; first and foremost, they needed to overcome their ignorance of the world by doing the work to make cosmopolitan connections with the world's "living heart." She may have entitled her European dispatches "Things and Thoughts from Abroad," but the people that she met and connected with there were her true calling.

Among the first to distinguish tourists from travelers, Fuller hoped Americans would become the latter, who gained deeper, transformative insights from their forays abroad. The polyvocal potential of travel-writing, which she purposefully embraced to the fullest extent, appealed to her because it matched the polyvocality of life in a world of difference. Fuller's belief in the importance of individuals and desire to understand difference puts her in line with the twenty-first century philosophy Appiah presents, although her activism abroad actually took her farther than Appiah is comfortable going. She saw that her country was ready to embark on a new course of imperialism and hoped to correct it—not by staying out of the world but by engaging in it productively. Such engagement began with individual adaptability and the willingness to embrace

cultural difference—traits Fuller felt Americans should bear as their “star” (Summer on the Lakes 77)

George Catlin, James Fenimore Cooper and Margaret Fuller never met, but their careers intersected in interesting ways. They responded to the unfamiliar with curiosity. All were drawn to the adventure and cosmopolitan potential of travel, were thoughtful about cross-cultural learning, and believed that exchange with foreigners was profitable even when it was not lucrative. They shared more tangible experiences as well; all, for example, were influenced by time spent in Paris. Most famous to tourists for its fashionable social scene, the city through most of the nineteenth century simmered in revolutionary activity, avant-garde art and liberal thought. Catlin and Fuller both met Georges Sand; Cooper and Fuller were involved in organizations of exiles from Italy and Poland. Paris was a key gathering place for revolutionaries working for dramatic political change in nearly every European nation. The Americans found people involved actively in supporting the causes of democracy and social reform, and risking their lives to do so, and were inspired to action in ways they had not been at home. But while Fuller admired the freedom of French women, Cooper and Catlin did not, and while Cooper and Fuller supported forces working against Citizen-King Louis-Philippe, Catlin was, for a time, kept afloat by the King's promise of patronage. Each writer formed and/or deepened significant connections with foreigners met in the French capital: Cooper met Lafayette and Adam Mickiewicz, the latter of whom would have a profound influence on Margaret Fuller as well; Catlin worked with Arthur Vattermo, the ventriloquist founder of international libraries and museums on two continents.

The writers also shared the experience of financial hardship. Even had they been so inclined, the nineteenth-century equivalent of a jet-setting, “pampered fashionista” lifestyle was well out of their reach. The cheaper cost of living was a factor in Cooper's decision to take his family abroad, Fuller's desire to stay, and Catlin's decision to settle there. All three hoped to

maneuver in Europe to profit from their work in a way they had failed to do in the United States: Catlin, by showcasing a work in a way that would prove its value to those at home, Cooper, to negotiate deals with foreign publishers, Fuller, to gather material. Scraping together a living on advances from her New York editor and charitable friends, Fuller did without servants and shared dark rooms to save money in Italy. Many writers of the time tried to turn travel experiences into cash once they returned home, but these writers were led by their need to pay what locals did to hone their cosmopolitan skills. While pecuniary difficulty caused them the same practical problems they cause anyone, they also helped to enable their practice of cosmopolitanism by removing the possibility well-heeled travelers have of insulating themselves from the different culture around them.

More painfully, Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller were faced with a similar lack of receptivity by the public they wrote for. Catlin's collection languished in a basement for decades; Cooper was labeled a Europeanized curmudgeon. Fuller's untimely death makes her case a bit more nebulous; it is impossible to know what she would have done and faced had she returned to the U.S. with her Italian husband and son as she'd planned (although it is tempting to imagine). She herself seemed to dread her return, fearing she would scandalize her friends and family and be unable to support herself. As it is, her first biographers and posthumous publishers painted a very limited picture that missed, downplayed or excised many of her most important ideas, and her work, too, remained in obscurity for too long.

Each of these writers, though, was a self-conscious traveler, recognizing that their exposure to foreign culture was changing them, and interested not only in cultural difference for its own sake but about the problems of cultural difference—conflicts when cultures collide, and problems when one group's cultural identity is seen as unstable. They recognized that the United States was a place born of and existing with multiculturalism in a multicultural world more than a century before that term became a political commonplace. In the antebellum U.S., writers had to decide how to depict

American cultural identity just as all travelers must decide, consciously or not, how to interpret the foreign cultures they visit, and all travel writers must decide how to write them. Some writers recognized that to be an American travel-writer meant making these decisions not only about the foreign subject, but that of “home” as well; they were “onstage” at home and abroad and felt themselves so, working consequently to revise perceptions of Americans and United States culture to include a brand of cosmopolitanism that still seems ahead of its time. When Catlin wrote about how Indians thought white people were unhygienic, or Cooper's Captain Truck imagines that the Arabs attacking them have good reason to fear them, they tried to show Americans that the way they appeared to foreigners could teach them about who they actually were. Catlin, Cooper, and Fuller hoped that Americans could “disrobe” in mind (Catlin 1841:1:198) to the “new spells” (Fuller SoL 75) that foreigners could teach them, and so make their culture, as Fuller put it, “beat with the living heart of the world” (81).

Notes

1 Later versions of American cosmopolitanism than those I examine in this project are briefly addressed later in this chapter. For a general view of the topic, see for example the editorial introduction to the third volume of The Norton Anthology of American Literature, which covers the time period between the Civil War and the first World War. A section entitled “The Literary Marketplace” proclaims that “as the United States became an international political, economic, and military power [...] in its new security [...] it welcomed (in translation) the leading European figures of the time—Leo Tolstoy, Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekov, Émile Zola, Benito Pérez Galdós;” meanwhile, American writers “established the literary identity of distinctively American protagonists... [including] psychologically complicated citizens of a new international culture” (Ronald Gottesman, Arnold Krupat, eds. Volume C, 1865-1914. 6th Ed.. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003, 6, 7.). The next volume highlights the work of expatriate modernists (Pound, Stein) who set the precedent for elite American cultural figures moving to Europe which continued through the

twentieth century and is not unheard of today.

The long history of American tourism in Europe is of course relevant to my work and will also be discussed later in this chapter as well as elsewhere in this project. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Americans' interest in travel had already made travel-writing one of the most successful forms in the literary market, beginning with the travel-writing of well-known writers like Washington Irving and culminating with the remarkable and prolific career of Bayard Taylor. The bulk of that writing lacked the depth of cross-cultural engagement examined here, favoring instead the adventures of tourists interested in “conquering” a list of must-see sites and seeking stories and souvenirs to share with friends at home.

2 Charles Eliot Norton capped his early career in international business, which involved extensive world travel, with a career as professor of fine arts at Harvard from 1875-1898. He worked closely with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and James Russell Lowell and cultivated associations between American and European artists.

3 As in any era, xenophobia in the early republic was fueled by internal politics. The campaign against the cosmopolitans in Paris had been fueled by the Federalists, who sought more isolationist policies than their political opponents. For more examples of the ways electoral politics influenced immigration and naturalization policy, in the nineteenth century and beyond, see Shrag. The American government's efforts to insulate the nation from foreign influences were not limited to the domestic “threats” posed by immigrants or the (real or imagined) interference of citizen diplomats abroad; the Monroe Doctrine was an extension of the same desire to protect the United States from foreign influences. The politics of Franco-American relations at the turn of the nineteenth century and the resulting effects on American cosmopolitanism are thoroughly detailed

by Ziesche, who ends his book with the following quotation from Jefferson: “You see, my dear sir, how easily we prescribe for others a cure for their difficulties, while we cannot cure our own” (170).

4 American reaction to the perceived “calumny” in the work of European travel writers on the U.S. will be discussed in chapter 3.

5 For more on how nineteenth-century Americans saw travel as a way to define and affirm the value of the U.S., see Larzer Ziff’s Return Passages: Great American Travel Writing, 1780-1910 (2000).

6 For a good discussion of Longfellow’s engagement with European art, see Matthew Pearl, “Preface.” Inferno by Dante. Trans. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. New York: Modern Library, 2003. xi-xvi.

“Untasted Liberty”: George Catlin’s Cosmopolitan Project

Nineteenth-century Americans generally kept their clothes on. The following passage, therefore, makes an impression: “I thought it best not to displease them in this; so I laid off my clothes, and straddled the naked back of my round and glossy little pony” (Catlin Letters:1:198). The saddle-less pony must have been a novelty to most readers, but that writer’s own nakedness would have been shocking. Clearly, this was a man willing to step outside the bounds of conventional behavior.

The rather breathless title of George Catlin’s first book conveys his enthusiasm for his subject, his belief in the urgency and interest of his cause and his rush to get his work to market. *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians, Written during Eight Years’ Travel amongst the Wildest Tribes of Indians in North America in 1832, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39* is a hefty text - over five hundred pages in two volumes with a wide range of offerings, including hundreds of illustrations. Lacking salutations or addressees, these are not traditional “letters,” but chapters in Catlin’s quest to share his experience with a wider audience. Part travelogue, part journal, part ethnography, part tall tale, and part political sermon, Catlin’s writing is a frankly personal account of his impressions gleaned from years spent traveling largely beyond the western frontier to study and paint the native peoples who lived there.

George Catlin was born into a large Pennsylvania family that had something of a history of Indian encounters; Catlin’s grandfather fought in Indian wars, and his mother had briefly been a captive (Sarton 77). At twenty-six he abruptly left his career in law to become an artist who made the land and native people of the newly-opened west his subject. That decision determined his life’s course. He never wavered from his project and demanded that the American citizenry focus its attention on Indians, hoping it would then come to understand them and even relate to them. His efforts to promote his art and its subject led to decades of travel, four hefty books and several

smaller publications, countless presentations on two continents, and an impressive collection of paintings. He repeatedly insisted that his purpose was not only to attain and dispense knowledge of Amerindian cultures, but also, in so doing, to correct the widespread misconceptions and stereotypes that were commonly held by his countrymen.

Catlin is best known today as an artist—one without whom “the entire subsequent history of the art of the American West could not have been the same” (Troccoli 12). His paintings, which always adhere to the Western theme, are striking for their bold use of naturalistic color, their range from formal portraits to sweeping, action-driven landscapes, and their sheer number [1]. Compelling as they are, they were never meant to stand alone. Catlin consistently included Native American handicrafts collected on his travels alongside his paintings in his “Indian Gallery” and accompanied the visual displays with posted text and lectures. He often wrote lengthy, explanatory inscriptions on the reverse sides of his paintings and sketches. The book mentioned above was envisioned as both prelude and accompaniment to his exhibition. He was not a man of letters; his prose, which was written quickly and tends to be repetitive and disorganized, is unpolished. Even so, it conveys a strong sense of its author and his passionate sense of mission.

Catlin's visits to Amerindian lands and to Europe occasioned novel and multi-layered cross-cultural encounters. Combining his skills in observation with an adventuresome willingness to transcend boundaries, he provided an alternative model for how his contemporaries in the new nation could live as culturally "American." Since it lacked a deep history, American-ness was an identity that seemed unformed or unstable, particularly when confronted either domestically or abroad with the foreign. Too often, that instability resulted in anxiety that inspired xenophobic responses. Catlin had direct experience with this when his efforts to make his countrymen recognize the inherent value of Amerindian culture were rejected. As an American citizen living among Indians and Europeans and negotiating their mutual understanding, Catlin's approach to other cultures modeled his notion of how Americans should conduct themselves. In this study, what

Catlin's work reveals about himself and his ideas is the focal point.

Catlin was among the earliest of American ethnographers, and has been respected as such, even after certain inconsistencies and inaccuracies were discovered in his work [2]. Partly due to the conditions in which he worked, and partly to his Eurocentric bias and related failures to understand all that he saw among the Native Americans, ethnohistorians have questioned some of Catlin's information. Still, modern anthropology can glean cultural knowledge that can no longer be found elsewhere from careful study of his work (Miller 315). For my own inquiry into nineteenth-century conceptions and manipulations of the meanings of "culture," the fact that Catlin may have mistaken or misremembered which style of shirt was associated with which ceremony is less important than the fact that he was convinced that such cultural differences bore meanings worth understanding.

He was pessimistic about the prospects of the "savage." In this, he is complicit in the American imagination of Amerindians as a disappearing race, destined to vacate the land for their (superior) white successors. Countless times in his letters, Catlin pronounces Native Americans "doomed," and this sense of an impending end was a major factor in his decision to make them his subject. At the same time, Catlin clearly attributes the "inevitable" decline of Indian civilization to contact with white men. He even proposes that Americans stay out of a large section of the west to enable Indians to live there in their own way. His sense of the evils suffered and threats faced by Native Americans gave urgency to his work.

Towards the middle of his first book, Catlin links the failure of most of his countrymen to respect Native Americans to the publishing industry. Too often, he felt, Americans too quickly believed what they read about Indians (books by economically- or politically-motivated writers) instead of seeking to know them as fellow human beings. Of widely available, often sensationalist sources of information on Indians, he wrote that

Book-making nowadays, is done for money-making; and he who takes the Indian for

his theme, and cannot go and see him, finds a poverty in his matter that naturally begets error, by grasping at every little tale that is brought or fabricated by their enemies. Such books...herald the character of a people who never can disprove them [...].The poor Indian who has no redress, stands stigmatized and branded....If the system of book-making and newspaper printing were in operation in the Indian country awhile, chapters would soon be printed, which would sicken the reader to his heart, and set up the Indian, a fair and tolerable man. (2:7-8)

Catlin did his best to print just such “chapters.” In so pointing out the qualities of Amerindians, of course, he highlighted the deficiencies of white Americans in being “fair and tolerable.” He explored Indian territory to gather the facts he needed to speak for the voiceless. He sought to re-educate the public—to disabuse Americans of what he says were commonly-held untruths, replacing those deleterious ideas with facts of his own discovery.

The physical vulnerability he faced encountering unknown groups of Indians, when he was often dependent on them for food and shelter, as well as his simple willingness to see the Indians as fellow human beings highlighted the injustice and inaccuracy of white perceptions of Indians while challenging cultural assumptions about the superiority of the “civilized.” In his eleventh letter, Catlin observes that the “Indian is a beggar in Washington City, and a white man is almost equally so in the Mandan village. An Indian in Washington is mute, is dumb and embarrassed; and so is a white man...in this place” (1841:1:85-6). Catlin’s vulnerability reverses the traditional contact scenario; though never their captive, he is at the Indians’ mercy. With this realization comes sympathy. Were the Indians indeed less than human, as racist attitudes and policies of the time suggested, Catlin would not be “dumb and embarrassed”; like many of his forbears, he would dismiss Indian behaviors as animalistic or even demonic. Instead, he recognizes and values cultural difference. Traveling among the Amerindians, George Catlin formed ideas about the performance of cultural identity and about cross-cultural learning that would form his life’s work

and that would enable him to access a new kind of experience in a range of foreign places.

I offer here a close reading of Catlin's presence as cultural intermediary in his ethnography. The book is as much about his personal project as it is about his subject. As a man seeking to meet Amerindians on their own terms, he was a rare case study, and the lukewarm support he received is telling; mainstream Americans were not interested in viewing Indians as living people with a culture worth learning about. Then I will explore, in his subsequent work, his continued engagement with Indian cultures, but also, in his travels to Europe, a new perspective on his own (white) American culture. Most important, Catlin's writings of his experience in Indian lands and abroad demonstrate his exceptional receptivity to foreignness. They tell a tale of a cosmopolitan encouraging his American readers to take a different approach to difference, and of a life consequently spent swimming upstream. Catlin did not see or market himself as a "travel-writer" but rather an artist and advocate for the Indians offering his own brand of proto-ethnography to the nineteenth-century reading public. Nevertheless, his work is an unusual addition to the travel-writing genre, and particularly productive in its presentation of how one adventurous traveler's experience of cultural difference led to cosmopolitan awareness.

The "Mind Susceptible": Catlin Beyond the Frontier

Catlin stood out for his interest in and willingness to study—or perhaps, even to acknowledge—Native American culture. Deeply troubled by Jacksonian-era treatment of Native Americans and their lands, Catlin called for changes not only in policy but in mindset. His was a call for open-mindedness, but it was also an advertisement for adventure; as an artist and as a writer, Catlin hoped to entertain as he educated. He could also be surprisingly forthright about his own limitations. While a tone of unrelenting good humor reminiscent of a camp counselor prevails in his text, readers also detect moments of inconsistency or peevishness that interrupt the overall

boosterism; it is not unusual for him to admit his utter bafflement at some of the native practices he witnesses. This honesty with self and readers bolsters the richness of the text as well as Catlin's reputation as a cultural ambassador. Catlin invited readers to join him in his adventures beyond the frontier and into a new world view that lay outside the nineteenth-century American comfort zone. As is hinted above, he was not afraid to laugh at his own discomfiture, for he was convinced that discomfiture arising from new experiences could be productive, even if it did leave one shockingly exposed.

The literal exposure quoted in this chapter's opening took place during Catlin's stay in the Minataree Village on the upper Missouri, described in Letter 24. Judging from that letter as a whole, this stay resulted in an unusual number of interactive experiences for Catlin, who casts himself in a greater percentage of the scenes he describes there than is his wont. The letter begins with the notice that it is being written from the writer's curtained bed, as that is the only place where he is able to "steal a little time from the gaze of the wild group that is continually about me" (1:191). Catlin attributes some of the unusual activity of this visit to the fact that he is but one of three guests the Minataree are welcoming (two Crow chiefs are visiting at the same time) and the concurrence of these visits has resulted in a bustling, festive atmosphere. Crossing a river, Catlin's raft is swamped by groups of frolicking "beautiful girls" (196) in a scene that echoes fantastic contact scenes described by early explorers in Polynesia; later, he is befriended by an old man who holds a feast in his honor. As a sequel to that celebration he is invited to witness the "amusements" of the young people, and it's here that the horse-racing takes place. Catlin sympathizes with "a fine-looking young fellow, whose horse had been twice beaten on the course...for which, his sister, a modest and pretty girl, was most piteously howling and crying" (197). Catlin is caught up in the excitement of the scene, and, perhaps, sees an opportunity for gallant intervention. Borrowing a mediocre pony, Catlin arranges a race, aware that a win against the visiting artist will help restore the young man's reputation. The horse-racing episode is such an illustrative example of

Catlin's ability to cross cultural boundaries—and of what happens when he does—that it's worth quoting in full:

Some considerable delay here took place, from a *condition*, which was then named to me, and which I had not observed before, that in all the races of this day, every rider was to run entirely denuded, and ride a naked horse! Here I was completely balked, and having no one by me to interpret a word, I was quite at a loss to decide what best to do. I found however, that remonstrance was of little avail; and as I had volunteered in this thing to gratify and flatter them, I thought it best not positively to displease them in this; so I laid off my clothes, and straddled the naked back of my round and glossy little pony, by the side of my competitor, who was also mounted and stripped to the skin, and panting with a restless anxiety for the start.

Reader! did you ever imagine that in the *middle of a man's life* there could be a thought or feeling so *new* to him, as to throw him instantly back to infancy; with a new world and new genius before him—started afresh, to navigate and breathe the elements of naked and untasted liberty, which clothe them in their cool and silken robes that float about him; and wafting their life-inspiring folds to his inmost lungs? If you never have been inspired with such a feeling, and have been in the habit of believing that you have thought of, and imagined a little of every thing, try for a moment, to disrobe your mind and your body, and help me through feelings to which I cannot give utterance. Imagine yourselves as I was, with my trembling little horse underneath me, and the cool atmosphere that was floating about, and ready, more closely and familiarly to embrace me, as it did, at the next moment, when we “were off,” and struggling for the goal and the prize. (198)

While Catlin's surprise at the condition of nudity here is suspicious, as it is difficult to believe that, observing the races, he failed to observe the racers' state of undress, his emotional response seems

unfiltered and genuine. The situation begins somewhat uncomfortably with Catlin's what-have-I-gotten-myself-into paralysis, augmented by his linguistic inability to make himself understood. Already an object of attention, and now having placed himself squarely center stage, he is temporarily "completely balked" □ muted and embarrassed. While Catlin is not unaware of his audience, and may be dramatizing his own confusion and reservations here for the sake of its sensibilities, his uncomfortable hesitation seems sincere. Catlin finds himself at an impasse. As he claimed in the opening letter of his book, his goal is to be "immersed in the Indian country, mingling with red men, and identifying [him]self with them as much as possible, in their games and amusements; in order to familiarize [him]self with their superstitions and mysteries, which are the keys to their character" (3). His stated mission is to gain the fullest possible understanding of Amerindian ways. His own long-held assumption of the propriety of remaining dressed in public, particularly in mixed company, here comes into conflict with his self-perception as a seasoned and open-minded traveler and adventurer. Realizing, though, that if his credibility rests on his immersion in Indian culture, this is a moment where he must, so to say, put his money where his mouth is, Catlin lets his notions of propriety go, and gamely strips.

The apostrophe that follows is rare for Catlin, which makes the breathless assertion that's he's found "a new world and a new genius" all the more remarkable. He seems born again by the feel of the "elements" on his body; he feels a vital freedom in the "cool and silken robes" of "naked and untasted liberty." There is a clear physical side to the sensation Catlin finds so invigorating, as he explains how good it is to feel the air he breathes not only inwardly – in his lungs – but outwardly, on his skin. But the experience is all-encompassing; Catlin is "started afresh." How are we to understand that? At the beginning of the race, Catlin did not have the words to explain to the Minataree his reluctance to remove his clothing because he did not speak enough of their language. Now, although he and his readers share a language, he faces a similar obstacle. Because he has experienced something he can't imagine experiencing within his own culture, he finds he cannot

describe that experience in that culture's terms – that is, in English. Instead, he must ask the reader to travel with him away from those terms, and into the culture of the Minataree, through the vehicle of the horse race. His request that readers “disrobe” in mind and body, to understand “feelings to which [he] cannot give utterance,” might seem figurative were it not for the facts of the incident that he is describing. Catlin relates many of his experiences in Indian culture in his book, but this “feeling so new” is the only one in which he asks readers to imagine themselves. His loss for words is indicative of his perceived immersion in Indian-ness, and his response indicates his enthusiastic willingness to participate in that immersion.

His cross-cultural experience is one he wishes his readers to share, if only in imagination; he offers it up as something new for even the most sophisticated reader, for the artist-adventurer believes it impossible that any American could meet coolly a situation that catches him off guard. Catlin believes that to follow in his footsteps would be beneficial to his readers, as not just a novelty but an enlightening educational experience that seems to make especial sense for Americans. To a young nation already steeped in the rhetoric and ideology of freedom, his invocation of “untasted liberty” issues a challenge difficult to ignore. Born and raised in the United States, Catlin experiences his first taste of liberty while outside of its borders, among the Minataree. The assertion is not just that the Minataree know liberty in a way that Americans don't. More important is that the experience of stepping away from one's known world and trying on aspects of a new enables the fullest experience of freedom. The liberty Catlin tastes arises not from the Indians but from his willingness to attempt to cross into their world—not to remain, but to look around, experiment, and grow.

Catlin's pride in losing the horse race is clear. He delights in his cosmopolitan baptism for the experience itself and for his response. Nor is he unaware of its capacity to entertain readers—and spectators. As soon as his competitor is far enough in advance that the winner of the race is

clear, Catlin circles back to the starting point and dresses, “greatly to the murmuring disappointment of the women and children.” Here is a glimpse of Catlin’s sense of humor, which is not infrequently detectable beneath the surface of his prose; in this, Catlin echoes the bad-boy delight of Thomas Morton and prefigures the confident, rakish tone later adopted in travel writing by Mark Twain. The race demonstrates that one must be willing to endure some embarrassment to receive the freeing rewards of intercultural travel. But also on display here is Catlin’s awareness that he may be as much an object of curiosity to the Minataree as they are to him. This is the same awareness that Catlin sought to convey to the reader in opening his letter, when he reiterated the difficulty in finding time and space to himself to process and record his experiences. This awareness is also a marker of Catlin’s understanding of the potential mutuality of the cultural discovery tour upon which he embarked. Rather than effacing himself – as cultural observer, and as writer – he actively engages his subject (here, the Minataree) by forming relationships and participating in their affairs.

That engagement harmonizes with his stated goals in publishing his *Notes*: to educate, to entertain, and to advocate. That third goal decisively marks the activism in Catlin’s approach. In his opening letter, Catlin outlined his motives in an explanatory justification of his travels and his book. He wrote of the prevailing ignorance about the native inhabitants of their continent; he argued that that ignorance has led to egregious treatment of these people at the hands of Americans:

I am fully convinced, from a long familiarity with these people, that the Indian’s misfortune has consisted chiefly in our ignorance of their true native character and disposition, which has always held us at a distrustful distance from them; inducing us to look upon them in no other light than that of a hostile foe...There is no difficulty in approaching the Indian and getting acquainted with him in his wild and unsophisticated state, and finding him an honest and honorable man; with feelings to meet feelings, if the above prejudice and dread can be laid aside, and any one will take the pains, as I have

done, to go and see him. (8)

Catlin condemns the degradation of Indian peoples that has resulted from contact with white settlers and the ignorance he says enabled it. His sympathy, though, does not seem to be limited to the suffering Indians but extends to the citizens of the United States, who are suffering from corrupting misinformation. He assesses the situation neatly: we didn't know them, so we kept away, and then because we couldn't know them, we came to fear them. From that fear arose mistreatment and thence enmity. Catlin seems confident that, like him, others can step away from their history by learning about Indian culture, assuming that familiarity, in this case, will engender respect and therefore justice. But the transaction is not automatic; not just any contact will lead to the understanding Catlin seeks. Travelers must bring "feelings to meet feelings" with them to Indian country.

Here is the first qualification that Catlin admits is necessary for adventurers who wish to duplicate his experience, and it calls to mind the rush of emotion Catlin describes in the horse race. Cultural discovery requires a willing sensibility, and Catlin knows that this is a facility that most who come into contact with the Indians beyond the frontier – traders and soldiers – lack. He continues:

But the mass of the world, most assuredly, will *not* see these people; for they are too far off, and approachable to those only whose avarice or cupidity alone leads them to those remote regions, and whose shame prevents them, from publishing to the world the virtues which they have thrown down and trampled underfoot. (9)

The "mass" of Americans are separated from the "mass" of Amerindians by physical distance. Both groups have virtues that Catlin presumes they would recognize in each other were encounter possible. Since it generally isn't, the problem, he theorizes, lies with those who do make the trip. Contact could be mutually productive, but it is not automatically so. Catlin's call is for the right kind of contact. When it came to the masses, he was hopeful that cross-cultural contact could result

in positive exchange, but the masses didn't have real opportunities to experience that contact, and so could only conceive of the Indians from reports published by the few individuals who ventured away from white settlements and into Indian territory. The motivations of these go-betweens precluded meaningful cultural exchange.

Here Catlin introduced a major thesis of his book: the profit motive wreaks havoc on intercultural dynamics at individual and societal levels. Few of the white Americans who traveled beyond the frontier were driven by their curiosity. The text presents numerous iterations of traders that exemplify the "avarice and cupidity" he attributes to them in the passage quoted above. Their favored technique involves the exploitation of Indian unfamiliarity with alcohol or capitalism. Towards the end of the first volume, Catlin describes the trading process in terms of bait-and-hook addiction. Traders encounter a group of Indians and first make a show of their weapons and other goods exotic to the western lands, such as paper and calico. Soon after, the Indians

look to white men as wiser than themselves, and able to set them examples—they see none of these in their country but sellers of whiskey, who are constantly tendering it to them, and most of them setting the example by using it themselves; and they easily acquire a taste, that to be catered for, where whiskey is sold at sixteen dollars per gallon, soon impoverishes them, and must soon strip the skin from the last buffalo's back that lives in their country, to "be dressed by their squaws" and vended to the Traders for a pint of diluted alcohol. (257)

The first step in the transaction, then, involved the Indian's admiring astonishment at material artifacts of white power and culture [3]. Catlin had experienced this firsthand; he was feted by the Minataree and other groups impressed by the magic-seeming technology of canvas and brush. Although his talent occasionally got him into trouble when his subjects didn't like his work or felt their sitting for portraits had occasioned bad luck, for the most part it immediately granted him a special status in the eyes of his Indian hosts, who lacked a directly correlating artistic tradition. His

ability to capture individuals on canvas made him a favored person worthy of respect and honor. But while the knowledge that (at least in this) the Indians considered him powerful led Catlin to a sense of paternalistic responsibility, to many traders, it was simply a business opportunity. They introduced alcohol and then raised its price, until Indians had to deplete their natural and cultural resources in order to purchase it. To the Calvinist artist, this was bringing one of the evils of the world to a land it had never touched as well as ruining an opportunity for equitable exchange. Catlin recognizes that the profit motive is at odds with those of the cosmopolitan; economic exchanges interfere with, if they don't preclude, cultural ones.

He was savvy enough to know that individual purveyors of alcohol operated under a system encouraged by the U. S. government. Reiterating this point in the second volume, he wrote:

Goods are sold at such exorbitant prices, that the Indian gets a mere shadow for his peltries, &c. The Indian sees no white people but traders and sellers of whiskey; and of course, judges us all by them—they consequently hold us, and always will, in contempt; as inferior to themselves, as they have reason to do—and they neither fear nor respect us. When, on the contrary, if the Govt would promptly prohibit such establishments, and invite these Indians to our frontier posts, they would bring in their furs, their robes, horses, mules, &c., to this place, where there is a good market for them all—where they would get the full value of their property—where there are several stores of goods—where there is an honorable competition, and where they would get four or five times as much for their articles of trade, as they would get from a trader in the village, out of the reach of competition, and out of sight of the civilized world. (2:83-84)

Because Indian lands were so remote from white society, cultural exchange was as restricted as the fair trade of material goods. Since white consumers never met or even saw the providers of their furs, they were too easily able to accept accounts of interested traders, who affirmed that Indians were vice-ridden, primitive, dangerous, and altogether inferior, thus cutting off any desire for

meaningful contact and removing any sense that Indians had rights to their land that should be respected. The government perpetuated this system because it justified and enacted expansion. Trading posts, reinforced by military garrisons, were set up beyond the frontier to collect Indians' natural resources in exchange for alcohol and other goods. Soon, competition arose between tribes, and longstanding territorial understandings fractured, while alcoholism and sickness (an unintentional and surreptitious but virulent accompaniment of trade) unraveled the fabric of village life. The Indians' ability to resist encroachment on their lands diminished, and white immigrants built villages and then towns around the trading posts, then no longer "beyond the frontier." Soon after, enterprising traders set out to new Indian markets and the pattern continued.

Significantly, Catlin insisted that the Indians were not unaware of what was happening. The American public may have assumed Indians' general inferiority meant they didn't care about the loss of their lands, or couldn't conceptualize the "bigger picture"—Indians were bedazzled by the products of white civilization, and remained ignorant of the injustice and implications of the trading system. They were duped, but that only happened because of their own moral and intellectual failings. One could not deal with Indians as with rational beings, so there was no moral responsibility to treat them fairly; American policy was what it was because it could not be otherwise. But Catlin argued that interracial contempt and suspicion was mutual. Having spent time with Amerindians and engaged with them in cultural rather than material exchanges, Catlin could see white society through their eyes, and it wasn't an attractive picture. The Indians, he said, did *not* see white men as benefactors or masters, but as "inferior to themselves." Presumably, the Indians approached the traders with open minds, but were not unaware of the greed and ill-will with which they were received. Consequently, Indians learned to identify white men as exploitative, grasping, and unworthy of respect, and mistrust and disrespect between cultures was established and reinforced.

Catlin never made his own impressions of his experiences subservient to the expectations of his contemporary countrymen. Having been changed by his encounters with Amerindians, Catlin wrote of them as “fellow men” to edify even as he understood his efforts would not be likely to effect large-scale change. Hence he wrote, in part, as a cultural critic, a voice crying – literally, much of the time – from the wilderness, pointing out a need for reform. His repeated “doomings” of Indian cultures diminished the pro-Indian activism of his book. Pronouncing post-contact Indians living east of the Mississippi ruined, Catlin averted his eyes from them and sought out the “uncontaminated” Western tribes. And so, Catlin’s text is primarily a narrative of his personal discovery. Driven by enthusiastic curiosity, he approached the Indians he visited with a relatively open mind.

As a result, his letters read most productively as a record of the encounters of an unusually receptive traveler with foreign cultures. Unlike most of his fellow Americans, who traveled among the Indians (if they did) as soldiers or businessmen, fighting or trading, Catlin sought the Indians for their own sake. This is not to say that his motives were wholly disinterested; when the young artist saw the native emissaries parading the streets of Philadelphia, he decided to make them his subjects, and he spent his life struggling to construct a career out of presenting Amerindian culture to the public. The peripatetic success of that enterprise was enough to sustain his cosmopolitan wanderings and to grant him a legacy of art and writing he hoped for but despaired of attaining. His successes came because Catlin consistently displayed a willingness and aptitude for exploring difference and learning what he could from the experience. He encouraged his audience to adopt a similar attitude, offering up his observations as reasons for interest and advocacy. As much as he saw himself as an authority on Indian ethnography, though, he was remarkable for his awareness and acknowledgment of the limits of his explorations--of problems of mutual misinterpretation and translation failures.

Perhaps the most easily visible of these failures arose from the language barrier. Catlin learned to speak five native languages well enough to communicate, but his knowledge was functional rather than studied. He displayed the polyglot's confidence and comfort level with foreign languages, and a facility in both new language acquisition and cross-language communication; however, he did not emphasize language learning as a primary avenue to cultural understanding, writing that "it would be the work of a man's life-time to collect the languages of all the different tribes...and I shall, from necessity, leave this subject chiefly for others, who have the time to devote to them, to explain them to the world" (1:51). Even so, the book's appendix contains a four-page table comparing Mandan, Blackfoot, Riccaree, Sioux, and Tuscarora vocabularies. Although it contains some phrases that might prove useful to travelers, such as "I am sick" or "How do you do," the table is meant to be a guide only to the complexity and diversity of native languages. He recognized that linguistic diversity was a sign of cultural diversity, and that the amount of both among the Indian population would surprise most of his contemporaries: "the Author here repeats...that of the forty-eight languages which he has visited, he pronounces thirty of them as radically different...whilst the remaining eighteen may said to be dialects from four or five distinct roots" (2:262). But Catlin made no claims to linguistic expertise, insisting in his second book that those interested in studying Native American languages "should go themselves to the wigwams of the Indians, and there, in their respective tribes, open the books in which to record their various vocabularies" (1:85). From his descriptions of incidents where he was without a translator (and from scenes in his second book, where he himself acts as translator between Indians and Europeans), it's clear that his knowledge went well beyond the "survivor" level, but it's also evident that there were times when there were gaps in his understanding, whether because he was early in the learning process, the conditions were too challenging, or simply because there were dialects with which he remained unfamiliar.

While in the example of the horse race discussed above, Catlin's inability to express

himself clearly to the Indians he visited led to his acquiescence to their expectations and to a rewarding experience, at other times, he had to make do with minimal and thus unsatisfying exchanges of meaning. His attempts to decode the reasons behind native women's painting the parts in their hair red (1841:1:51) were never fruitful; he could not make the Osage understand the technology of written language (2:92). There were also some more viscerally-felt barriers to crossing cultural lines: unfamiliar with portraiture, Amerindians sometimes refused to be painted; the artist could not wholly hide his revulsion when served dog meat in a ceremonial feast. The latter two examples are imprinted by deeply-held cultural beliefs, not as easily glossed over – or laughed off – as linguistic difficulties often can be.

Appiah identifies such situations as times when the relativist philosophy of “live-and-let-live” collapses (2005:10), and the more difficult aspects of the cosmopolitan conversation come into play. Such encounters are successful when the conversation continues through moments when cultural values, and even taboos, are tested, and usually end with a respectful, if uncomfortable, acknowledgment of difference. These are moments when imagination must play a role in helping an individual move beyond offensive elements of foreignness. “Encounters, properly conducted, are valuable in themselves. Conversation doesn't have to lead to consensus about anything, especially not values; it's enough that it helps people get used to one another” (85). What's more, there are moments when “understanding” is not possible: “you can be genuinely engaged with the ways of other societies without approving, let alone adopting, them” (8). Just as we might reserve the worst aspects of our personalities for those dearest to us, whom we suffer to share our weakest moments, getting to really know a foreign culture means moving beyond the polished packages presented to tourists to unguarded, deeper and sometimes darker realities. A cosmopolitan must learn how to navigate these troubling conversations, whether the skeleton is in a foreign closet or his own.

Appiah articulates his approach to such moments of culture shock via the presentation of a

metaphorical mirror (a metaphor often used in imaginative representations of cross-cultural relationships—see, for example, the transnational work of Paul Giles). Appiah starts with a verse from a long poem of Richard Burton, entitled “The Kasidah:” “All Faith is false, all Faith is true:/ Truth is the shattered mirror strown/ In myriad bits;/ while each believes/ His little bit the whole to own.” (qtd Cosmopolitanism 5). Appiah argues that while “the deepest mistake is to think that your little shard of mirror can reflect the whole,” (8) his brand of cosmopolitanism goes farther in actual cross-cultural exchanges in the real world. “We can grant that there's some insight everywhere else and some error *chez nous*. But that doesn't help us when we are trying to decide exactly where the truth lies *this time*” (8). There are times when travelers encounter aspects of foreignness they find appalling, at a level deeper than unfamiliar condiment choices at dinner. Some situations demand a less than passive response from the cosmopolitan, who must decide how to respond. Catlin must decide, for example, how to understand a ceremony that to him is horrifying, but to Indians a meaningful part of their cultural identity. There is no easy solution. There is, however, much to be said for facing the disjunction head on. Appiah therefore modifies Burton's metaphor, suggesting that “there's no one shattered mirror; there are lots of mirrors [...] and we can at best agree to differ” (11).

Catlin's experience in the west was marked by these kinds of “conversations,” and his work encouraged others to take the first steps in the same exercise of the imagination, too, as he certainly wrote from a place beyond the familiar territory of his audience. In these situations, cultural others are divided by a wall of difference; the conversation occurs when the participants eschew bulldozing the wall – an operation during which someone's going to get crushed – in favor of peering through a crack in it, Pyramus-like, to get a glimpse (albeit a limited one) of the other side. With a bit of imagination, one can construct a sympathetic, if still inferential, impression of the world behind the wall. While this is not a wholly transcendent or utopian act, as the divisive barrier still stands, it is these moments that illuminate a traveler's response to a cross-cultural

encounter. The effort to understand the other's point of view, or to use Appiah's metaphor, to look into another's shard of the shattered mirror of global human culture, is a cosmopolitan gesture. Catlin's enthusiasm for picking up those shards, and for asking Americans to see the native reflections therein, was relentlessly displayed in the thoroughness of his work.

Countless aspects of diverse Amerindian cultures appear in Letters and Notes. Most of the time, the writer embraces what he sees and describes with confident authority and undisguised pleasure. The level of detail in his verbal and pictorial sketches have marked his work as early ethnography, but, as has already been seen in his bitter criticism of the destructive effects of expansion, his objectivity often lapses. When these failures to maintain an observing, non-judgmental detachment occur in passages that are ethnographic rather than reflective, they indicate shattered mirror moments; as much as he embraces the people he considers his vocation, Catlin is not an Indian himself, and he can't jump over every wall that differentiates Indian culture from his own, cosmopolitan as he may be. In these challenging situations, Catlin manages to maintain his honesty, if not his objectivity, and as a result allows his readers to work through his conflicting emotions along with him.

Catlin begins the lengthy letter that describes the most striking of these experiences with the words "OH! '*horribile visu—et mirabile dictum!*' Thank God, it is over, that I have seen it, and am able to tell it to the world" (1:155). The awesome "it" is the annual four-day celebration of a Mandan religious ceremony termed the O-kee-pa. Of all the tribes he visited, the Mandans most captured Catlin's imagination. His writing on them fills a significant portion of the book; of thirty-one letters, twenty-three are written from Mandan villages around the upper Missouri River, and the first appendix, "The Extinction of the Mandans" (2: 257-261) is both a postscript to his visits, updating their situation, and a brief essay detailing Catlin's thoughts on their racial origins. Catlin describes several individual Mandans as friends, writing their biographies and painting their

portraits. The development of the friendship between Catlin and Mah-to-toh-pa, a second chief, leads to a mutual recognition of their affinity as fellow artists. Catlin paints the chief's portrait and is given a buffalo robe elaborately decorated with scenes that narrate its original wearer's life; once Mah-to-toh-pa interprets the meaning of the scenes, Catlin is sincerely impressed by the art form. Such relationships that Catlin nurtures with prominent Mandans ultimately grant him admission to the most secret ceremonials of the tribe, when a leading shaman, declaring Catlin's portraiture skills a mark of special status, claims the visitor as a fellow medicine-man. During each day of the festival, Catlin, the "*white medicine painter*" (1:161) is accompanied by the American fur trading agent from the nearest military installation at Fort Clark, James Kipp, and chaperoned by several Mandans.

Even for a writer as unreserved as Catlin, the exclamation above contains surprisingly strong, confounding emotion—emotion, again, that English can't express. Given the scenes of torture Catlin describes, his reaction seems understandable. Two components of the O-kee-pa would shock most outsiders: the initiatory tortures of young men, and the celebratory public promiscuity of the "Buffalo Feast." Respecting the sensibilities of his Victorian audience, Catlin left the details of the latter out of his otherwise comprehensive and sequential description [4]. He also protected his readers (and, perhaps, his reputation) from raunchier details of the ceremonial costumes of some of the major players in the O-kee-pa, filling in the resulting gaps with italicized nonsensical gibberish, that probably was meant to look Indian to English-speaking readers (Ewers 18).

After its exclamatory introduction, the narration of the O-kee-pa begins with an explanation of its religious meaning. Not unaware that many of his contemporaries would protest the use of "religious" to describe any Amerindian practice, expecting adjectives like "ritualistic," "pagan," or "superstitious" instead, Catlin justifies his use of that term in a philosophical reflection on the meaning of "religion" and "worship" which comes to the conclusion that the Amerindians

are by nature as genuinely spiritual as any Christian. All the same, he does not mean to equate their religion with Christianity; this was a line he could not or dared not cross, at least in his writing. Native religion “if it be not correct, had this much to command the admiration of the enlightened world, that they worship with great sincerity, and all according to one creed” (1:156). He could respect and even admire foreign spiritual tradition, but it was too different from the dogma that framed his own cultural identity – and that of his audience – for him to consider deeming it “correct.” Still, he takes time to learn about tribal religious traditions, and even more to write about them, and except for his inability to grant as truth doctrines that contradict those of his own society, he is not condescending or sensational.

The torture rites, Catlin explains, are “for the purpose of conducting all the young men of the tribe, as they annually arrive to the age of manhood, through an ordeal” which will allow the tribal leaders to “decide who is the most hardy and best able to lead a war-party in case of extreme exigency” (157). As if apologizing for the graphic violence to come, Catlin continues:

This part of the ceremony, as I have just witnessed it, is truly shocking to behold, and will almost stagger the belief of the world when they read of it. The scene is too terrible and too revolting to be seen or to be told, were it not an essential part of the whole, which will be new to the civilized world, and therefore worth their knowing. (157)

The primary sentiment expressed, that the new is, by definition, worth knowing, is the most important motivation for Catlin’s work; he wants to learn about the unknown, even when it seems disturbing. At the start of the O-kee-pa, though, Catlin is all enthusiasm, hurrying to each new event with his sketchbook in hand, and that enthusiasm does not diminish even as events turn brutal. Catlin watches--perhaps wincing, but up close, and capturing what he sees with pen and brush.

At least once, his enthusiasm nearly led to his expulsion from the medicine lodge where the most secret rites were being performed. Catlin had a clear view of the proceedings from where he

sat in an elevated seat in the medicine lodge from sunrise “until sun-down for four days, the whole time which these strange scenes occupied” (162). His patience wasn’t equal to his stamina, though; at times he displayed a restless curiosity that caused him to stray from his assigned seat. During the first phase of the ceremony the action was slow, as the men of the tribe silently watched the medicine men meticulously paint the young men who were to undergo the initiation and venerated the sacred objects situated in the lodge. While the importance of these objects was known by all the Mandans present, as practitioners of any faith know the often metaphysical meanings of the symbols and instruments used in their worship rites, Catlin didn’t have time or experience enough to be able to understand what he was observing. The ethnographer (and, perhaps, readers sense, the little boy) in him was unsatisfied, and so he repeatedly rose from his place to approach the center to get a better view. Each time the reaction of the crowd forced him back to his proper seat, until he

at length quieted [his] stifled curiosity as well as [he] could, upon learning the fact, that so sacred was the object, and so important its secrets or mysteries, that not *I* alone, but [...] all the village, save the conductor of the mysteries, were stopped from approaching it, or knowing what it was. (162)

Catlin’s sense of “knowing what it was” here is literal. He wants to know of what it’s made, and he’s probably correct when he writes that many of the Mandans don’t know this, either. It seems, though, that his failure to find an answer is because he asks the wrong question. When he asks the shamans about the object, they inform him that it’s unspeakable, so Catlin gives up, assuming that he “had a *degree* or two yet to take before I could fathom all the arcane of Indian superstitions” (163). The object’s importance is spiritual, and its power comes from what it represents as much as what it is; naturally an outsider, like Catlin, has difficulty understanding it. With his admission above, Catlin acknowledges not only his ignorance, but the limits of his knowledge. As a Christian, he can’t grasp the sacredness of Mandan medicine, and “know” what the object “was,” in the same way that the Mandans do.

Catlin certainly is less than comfortable hitting this wall of understanding; in his frustration, he even slips into sour-grapes dismissal, concluding that the object “might have been at last nothing but a silly bunch of strings and toys, to which they pay some great peculiar regard” (163). And it might be for the best that the Mandan medicine men don’t try to explain the object to him. When they do take time out to explain their spiritual views to their visitor, he listens attentively, and dutifully records them. But after relating the mythic origins of the waters stored in the lodge, he explains, “I did not think it best to advance any argument against so ridiculous a theory” (163). In part, such a judgmental, even insensitive comment can be understood as defensive; Catlin knows too much “pagan” theology might make his Christian audience nervous and needs to reassure them that he hasn’t gone native. Notwithstanding those concerns, though, his lack of sensitivity to cultural difference comes through again when he persistently and to no avail essays to purchase the ceremonial objects, then resigns himself to their acquisition via “the *medicine* operation of my pencil, which was applied to everything, and even upon that they looked with decided distrust and apprehension, as a sort of theft or sacrilege” (164).

There is a note of derision in these words, and in the actions they describe. Catlin is well aware that his attempt to set a price for objects whose value lies so clearly in the spiritual realm is offensive; he admits that to the Mandans such a proposal is criminal or sacrilegious. For an ethnographer or any cosmopolitan traveler—indeed, for anyone whose intentions are good—such behavior breaks the rules. Such an ethical lapse is uncharacteristic of Catlin, who most of the time remains in his self-prescribed role as an observer, striving to be as detached as possible. This detachment is not to be confused with objectivity, as his thesis is decidedly pro-Indian: “If you think me enthusiast, be it so; for I deny it not” (1:62). Nor is Catlin aloof; Catlin enthusiastically engages the Amerindians to elicit information, and, as in the example of the horse race, to enjoy himself. Then, too, his practice of painting what he observes also undermines his outsider’s detachment, somewhat, as inevitably his subjects react to seeing themselves on his canvas, but such

episodes serve more as conversation-openers than as self-interested interference. In the majority of cases his participation is strategic, meant to increase his understanding of foreign cultures as well as to cement personal relationships—he spent his time in the west “mingling with red men, and identifying myself with them as much as possible” (1:3). And in his notes, Catlin clearly seeks to describe, and not to judge, the cultures he’s observing, unless, that is, the judgment is one of praise.

Catlin’s response to the O-kee-pa is an aberration. From his description of the ceremonial proceedings, corroborated by other witnesses, it’s not difficult to understand what shook this nineteenth-century gentleman-artist from his customary open-minded and culturally sensitive stance. He had no previous experience of violence or physical suffering, and the tortures involved in the initiation ceremony were shocking and difficult to stomach. After long hours in the darkened and silent medicine lodge, the initiates, who have been kept awake and fasting for the previous sixty hours,

submitted to the cruelties in the following manner:--An inch or more of the flesh on each shoulder, or each breast was taken up between the thumb and forefinger [...] and the knife [...] was forced through the flesh below the fingers, and being withdrawn, was followed with a splint or skewer[...]. There were two cords lowered down from the top of the lodge [...] which were fastened to these splints or skewers, and they instantly began to haul him up. (1:170)

The description of the tortures continues in minute detail. The recorder’s responses are described just as faithfully. Gone is the mischievous Catlin of the tamer, preparatory part of the ceremony. The sight of the hanging sufferers is “appalling” and “frightful”(1:170); their “pleasant” and steady ability to meet his gaze “start involuntary and uncontrollable tears” from his own eyes (1:171); upon seeing the “last race” the dragged initiates must undergo he is sure it must be fatal (1:173); the ceremony, in sum, is “shocking and disgusting” (1:176).

Catlin never expresses any fear for his own person – and there’s no reason to believe he

was in any physical danger while among the Mandans – but clearly, witnessing such infliction of pain would have been a terrifying experience. Catlin avers that seeing the torture up close, with the silence the initiates maintain enabling him to hear the sound of the blade cutting the skin, causes him to feel pain (1:171). He is made vulnerable by such unaccustomed fear, and his receptivity diminishes; he certainly is not going to volunteer to take part in *this* race. Nervous and well out of his comfort zone, Catlin forgets his habitual willingness to accept Amerindian culture on its own terms and slips into a reactionary state of culture shock. The derisive tone that is sometimes present in his notes on the O-kee-pa testify to his faithfulness in recording his experiences as they happened, for Catlin came out of his stay with the Mandans with a profound respect for the tribe. Readers of the whole book, in fact, get the feeling that if Catlin were to choose a favorite from among the diverse groups he visited, it would have been the Mandans.

Towards the end of his description of the O-kee-pa, Catlin writes:

I need record no more of these shocking and disgusting instances, of which I have already given enough to convince the world of the correctness of the established fact of the Indian's superior stoicism and power of endurance, although some recent writers have, from motives of envy, from ignorance, or from something else, taken great pains to cut the poor Indian short in everything, and in *this*, even as if it were a virtue.

I am ready to accord to them in this particular, the palm; the credit of outdoing anything and everybody, and of enduring more than civilized man ever aspired to or ever thought of. My heart has sickened also with disgust for so abominable and ignorant a custom, and still I stand ready with all my heart, to excuse and forgive them for adhering so strictly to an ancient celebration, founded in superstitions and mysteries, of which they know not the origin, and constituting a material part and feature in the code and forms of their religion. (176)

While Catlin hardly embraces Mandan tradition, here – on the contrary, the O-kee-pa is

“shocking,” “disgusting,” “ignorant,” “abominable” – he is willing to adapt a to-each-his-own attitude. His extended stay with the Mandans and the close bonds of friendship that resulted were enough to overpower his visceral reaction to the O-kee-pa tortures; through these careful conversations he had developed enough respect for the Mandans to try to understand or at least overlook a practice that shockingly flouts some of his core values. By no means does he rubber stamp or try to whitewash (except for the editing of sexual content that has been described) troubling aspects of Mandan culture. Though it’s easy to imagine an author with his agenda eliding the details of the O-kee-pa for fear that the unfamiliar brutality of the ceremony would alienate readers who might otherwise be sympathetic to Amerindian causes, Catlin wished to present the whole of Amerindian life and so did not allow readers to avert their eyes from even the most alien of indigenous practices. He likely understood that were he to act as editor as well as translator of Amerindian culture, censoring it in an attempt to shape the reception of his audience, he would have risked becoming the authors he so frequently railed against, who propagated inaccurate and thus pernicious views.

Just as fully as he shared, in words and pictures, his observations of Amerindian life, Catlin shared his own responses to what he saw, including those that strayed from the objectivity expected of an ethnographer. Here, he says that he is “ready to excuse and forgive” the Mandans for their celebration of the O-kee-pa, a statement that clearly demonstrates a stance not just as an observer, but as a judge of the foreign culture he’s experiencing. That stance feels paternalistic, and so in harmony with nineteenth-century, romantic conceptions of Native Americans as children of nature: they don’t know any better, it says, and so we can’t blame them for their horrifying behavior. Catlin falls into this attitude as a defensive posture when facing the culture shock induced by an irreconcilable clash in world views. For if he tempers his judgments in part and at times to cater to the demands of the Victorian mores of his audience, he still can’t escape the fact that he possesses some of those same sensibilities. The Mandans’ adherence to deeply-held religious traditions

might be a flaw in their character, but an understandable one, and one that could be corrected.

Severed as they are from the contaminating and contracting vices which oppose and thwart most of the best efforts of the Missionaries along the frontier,[...] they present a better field for the labours of such benevolent teachers than they have yet worked in, and a far better chance than they have yet had of proving to the world that the poor Indian is not a brute—that he is a human and humane being, that he is capable of improvement—and that his mind is a beautiful blank on which anything can be written if the proper means be taken. [...]

[...] they would soon see their most ardent desires accomplished and be able to solve to the world the perplexing enigma, by presenting a nation of savages, civilized and christianized, (and consequently *saved*), in the heart of the American wilderness.

(1:183-4)

The language here is slightly difficult to grasp. The call for a Mandan mission, so contrary to the rest of what Catlin elsewhere prescribed for Indian-white interaction, affirms his belief in the moveable nature of culture while attempting to win over his Christian audience. Catlin is also struggling to find a way to move past his own negative reactions to the O-kee-pa, which stands as a cultural difference he finds more difficult to swallow than most others. This, perhaps, is the “perplexing enigma”: how to reconcile an earnest desire to understand and coexist with difference to instances where that difference contradicts long-internalized values. Can Catlin see an understandable image through the shattered mirror? He fantasizes conversion as a solution to this irreconcilability, but he doesn’t seem committed to putting the plan in action; his passive reaction to missionaries he meets later in Europe support a reading of this call for Christianization as largely hypothetical. His admiration for Mandan culture is clear, and his offering of the Mandans as “blank slates” waiting for missionary efforts is an attempt to rationalize his negative reaction to the physical suffering he witnessed in the O-kee-pa. Exhorting others to venture upon a Mandan

mission he knows is unlikely to be undertaken is both therapy for his fleeting culture shock and a negotiation with his audience.

Though it did not match the spectacle of the O-kee-pa in intensity, another religious ceremony resulted in a similarly aversive reaction. This ceremony was a culinary experience that Catlin says he faced fairly regularly during his stays with Amerindians: the dog feast, for which a favored pet is sacrificed to be shared as a delicacy by all participants. He describes one, hosted by the Sioux. After the artist has been with the Sioux for some time, he witnesses the first arrival of a steamboat in their territory. The boat bears representatives of American military and business interests. Several days later, the Sioux arrange a feast to honor the visitors, saying “we give you our hearts in this feast—we have killed our faithful dogs to feed you—and the Great Spirit will seal our friendship” (1:229). An exchange of gifts, the sharing of the calumet, and other preliminaries follow. Then the feast begins. Catlin reports that the “civilized guests” are each served generous portions of the dog stew, which smells “savory and pleasing,” then explains:

In this most difficult and painful dilemma we sat; all of us knowing the solemnity and good feeling in which it was given, and the absolute necessity of falling to, and devouring a little of it. We all tasted it a few times, and resigned our dishes, which were quite willingly taken, and passed around with others, to every part of the group, who all ate heartily of the *delicious viands*. (1:230)

The response of the Americans to the dog feast displays their belief in the taboo against consumption of dogs. Thence comes the well-intentioned visitors’ “dilemma,” which is of the sort that all cosmopolitans must face. The compromise they reach – “devouring” the meat, but as little of it as possible – seems to work, as the Sioux seem satisfied and the dog feast goes on. Catlin doesn’t report the taste, as if to reinforce the fact that his consumption of the dog was a diplomatic rather than gustatory act. Emotional judgment of the experience, though, comes out in the tone Catlin uses to describe the Sioux as they eat “heartily” of the “*delicious viands*,” which

simultaneously express sarcasm, disdain, and incredulity, and characterizes the Sioux partakers as at best ignorant or crazy, or at worst, monstrous. With this evidence that his taste was reluctant and only taken because there was no satisfactory alternative, most of Catlin's fellow non-dog-eating readers would accept his breach of the taboo in the service of cross-cultural understanding. Even so, lest readers miss the importance of the visitors' taking part in the feast to favorable cross-cultural relations, he explains further: "this feast was unquestionably given to us, as the most undoubted evidence they could give us of their friendship; and we, who knew the spirit and feeling in which it was given, could not but treat it respectfully, and receive it as a very high and marked compliment" (1:230).

Catlin does not let the matter rest with that explanation. He continues his analysis of the dog feast experience with a reflective and fact-filled relation of his broader understanding of Amerindian culture. As a result, the effect of the derision contained in the first description of the act of partaking in the meat is overwritten by a sympathetic reading of the act from the native cultural perspective.

I feel authorized to pronounce the *dog-feast* a truly religious ceremony, wherein the poor Indian sees fit to sacrifice his faithful companion [...].

The dog, amongst all Indian tribes, is more esteemed and more valued than amongst any part of the civilized world. The Indian [...] keeps him closer company, and draws him nearer to his heart; [...] and on the rocks, and on their coats of arms they carve his image as a symbol of fidelity. Yet, with all of these he will end his affection with this faithful follower, and with tears in his eyes, offer him as a sacrifice to seal the pledge he has made to man; because a feast of venison or of buffalo meat, is what is due to every one who enters an Indian's wigwam; and of course, conveys but a passive or neutral evidence, that generally goes for nothing. (1:230)

Catlin's characterization of the dog feast as "religious" rather than superstitious indicates

his respect for Amerindian beliefs; his willingness to place their belief system in the same category as his own is decidedly enlightened. Just as he admired the stoicism displayed in the O-kee-pa, here he recognizes the sensibility of practitioners of the dog feast while offering it as further evidence of the Indians' overall generosity. All the same, there is a slightly condescending, if-only-they-knew-better edge to Catlin's "poor Indian," and his attestation of the pathos of the scene, as when, continuing, he gives a description of an Indian taking the head of his former companion from the stew pot to "descant on its former affection and fidelity with tears in his eyes" (1:230-1), seems contrived. The response to the dog-feast is an ambivalent one: while on one hand, it makes perfect sense to Catlin as an expression of religious beliefs, on the other, it's a troubling aspect of Indian culture that, like the O-kee-pa, he's willing to overlook and present to his readers as a non-threatening curiosity that arises from a wilderness people. Though it may not be *the* religion, it is *their* religion.

As the commentaries on the Mandans and Sioux demonstrate, the problem of the American Indians as nonbelievers is one that creeps up intermittently in the reflections that accompany Catlin's ethnographic descriptions. In sum, Catlin recognized Amerindian religion as such, and respected it enough to believe it should be left alone. Along with several digressions that speculate upon the Old Testament origins of different aspects of native religion, he offers numerous arguments in defense of its spiritual merit. For example, he writes that "the North American Indians, are nowhere *idolaters* – they appeal at once to the Great Spirit, and know of no mediator, either personal or symbolical" (2:232). Coming from a man of Catlin's Puritan upbringing, such a statement can be read as placing native religion on a higher spiritual plane than some forms of Christianity [5]. Catlin then remembers an encounter with a missionary who had described Indian religious traditions as "ignorant superstition" and "the absurd rantings of idolatry" (2:242). Pointing out that missionary's own ignorance, inattention, and close-mindedness, Catlin continues:

To such opinions as these I never yet gave answer, nor drew other instant

inferences from them, than, that from the bottom of my heart, I pitied the persons who gave them.

I fearlessly assert to the world, (and I defy contradiction,) that the North American Indian is everywhere, in his native state, a highly moral and religious being, endowed by his Maker, with an intuitive knowledge of some great Author of his being, and the Universe; in dread of whose displeasure he constantly lives, with the apprehension before him, of a future state, where he expects to be rewarded or punished according to the merits he has gained or forfeited in this world. (2:242-3)

Catlin's recognition of Amerindian religion is clear. What's more, the description of that religion in terms of Christian values – faith, piety, and humility - as well as the capitalization used in reference to its deity, which follows the form used by Christians, signals a cultural translation that aims to preclude or preempt intervention by external influences as superfluous, unmerited, and unwelcome. Though he might *imagine* Christian Mandans as a means of repairing the cross-cultural breach Appiah describes as a shattered mirror, in reality, he is content to accept - and even prefers - the Mandans as they are.

Catlin's call for appreciative non-interference in Amerindian culture had another source. Occasionally, he met Amerindians who forced him to come to terms with their perspective on his work and on Indian-white encounter in general. His willingness to immerse himself in Amerindian life, his struggle to understand or come to terms with the Amerindian world view, and the voices and actions of the people themselves bolstered his own observations of the results of the wrong kind of contact. I will provide two examples of two kinds of such encounters here. In both, Catlin was able to see his position as an outside observer and recorder of foreign cultures from another point of view. These incidents allowed him to see more clearly the cross-cultural implications of his work through their inversion of the terms Catlin usually used to see his own position as a

cosmopolitan traveler and cultural explorer. This inversion tended to shake the artist/ethnographer's accustomed confidence, to produce a bout of culture shock like that that induced by the O-kee-pa, and to have a similar effect: a deepening of his respect for cultural difference.

Towards the end of his book, a Sioux chief acting as an informant by patiently answering questions suddenly turns the tables and begins a cross-examination. It's a reminder that learning across cultures is always bi-directional, and an interesting inversion of Catlin's status as curious learner. Catlin's questions had focused on that great elephant in the room, that, when he can't ignore it, obstructs his wholehearted embrace of Amerindian culture: the practice of torture. He gets stuck on this subject, in part, because he wants to counteract popular portrayals of the Indians as cruel and merciless by showing the exaggeration and untruth of such stories; since he's witnessed some real instances of torture, he can't simply deny or refute these reports, and so he seeks to understand more deeply and thus to be able to justify or at least explain it to his audience. Still, this is one area where he doesn't hesitate to express his negative judgment to the Indians he's visiting. During this interrogation, he writes, he "freely condemned them for the cruelty of the practice," which must have strained the nerves of his informant, who "took occasion when I had got through, to ask *me* some questions relative to modes in the *civilized world*, which, with his comments upon them, were nearly as follow, and struck me, as I think they must every one, with great force" (2:241).

While in his second book, such "empire strikes back" instances of Amerindians turning the tables on the condescending curiosity of white observers to offer their less-than-impressed views of European society are not uncommon, this Sioux's pointed cross-examination stands out in Letters and Notes. Catlin is hardly uncritical of his own society, as demonstrated by his excoriation of the effects of contact on Amerindian populations, but he seems surprised to hear an Amerindian voice express a negative judgment of his native land. Catlin likes to posit himself as an emissary from an

unknown land, arriving in exotic cultures where individuals can have no preconceived notions about him. He is aware that that position as a mysterious cultural “blank” serves to disarm his informants, who have no reason to resist sharing their cultural life with him, and no basis of deciding how they might advantageously determine his experience. Catlin is traveling in remote areas, so actual contact has been limited to a select few whites and Amerindians who journey to or from installations on the frontier, and his actions would have set him apart from other white visitors. But as settlers often forgot or never knew, Amerindian trading networks had crisscrossed the American continent for centuries and permitted the exchange of information across distance and tribal difference. So when the Sioux follows his defense of his own practices – the punishing practices he’s described which have so disturbed his listener are acts permitted only in declared warfare – with what “he had often heard” (2:241) of white civilization, Catlin is caught off guard.

The Sioux continues by pointing out the practice of hanging criminals, which he sees as animalistic treatment of one’s “own people.” When Catlin affirms that white society does, indeed, sometimes put debtors in prison, not only the chief but all the Sioux gathered to listen laugh at this evidence of the perceived importance of currency. A similar reaction is evoked by the confirmation of other rumored cultural differences that seem ridiculous, strange, or appalling to the audience: soldiers who fight (and endure military discipline) for money, the attendance of male doctors at births, corporal punishment of children. Then the conversation moves to religion, and the Chief relates what he has heard about Christian doctrines, and expresses his shock that white people “killed the Great Spirit” (2:241). Unable to deflect their responses, a subdued Catlin continues:

He put me a chapter of other questions, as to the trespasses of the white people on their lands—their continual corruption of the morals of their women—and digging open the Indians’ graves to get their bones, &c. To all of which I was compelled to reply in the affirmative, and quite glad to close my note-book, and quietly to escape from the throng that had collected around me, and saying (though to myself and silently), that these and an

hundred other voices belong to the civilized world, and are practiced upon (but certainly, in no instance, reciprocated by) the “cruel and relentless savage.” (2:241-2)

Clearly, Catlin’s exchange with the Chief ends quite differently than it begins, with the consummate recorder enthusiastically *closing* his book. This incident appears in the final letter of the book, written from Fort Moultrie, South Carolina. Unlike those that precede it, this letter contains no sustained ethnography of an Amerindian subculture. Catlin was no longer “beyond the frontier.” He’d come to the end of his eight years of wandering, and consequently finished his book with a chapter that began with relevant incidents of his arrival at the fort – including his witnessing of the death of the conquered Seminole hero Osceola – and then shifted into a lengthy, reflective essay reiterating, organizing, and summarizing his ideas about Amerindian cultures (including a detailed artistic analysis of a Crow robe) and American policy (including several historical accounts of atrocities perpetrated upon various tribes). This Sioux exchange, then, is separated from Catlin’s description of Sioux culture and his experience with it. We don’t learn this Chief’s name or history, as if the author did, indeed, close his book, his zeal for reporting stymied by the Chief’s unexpected retorts.

Rarely did George Catlin do anything “quietly,” and he was never reticent in detailing the list of wrongs perpetrated by white settlements on Amerindians, so it’s not the content of the last part of the Chief’s speech, detailing the ill treatment of his people, that disturbed him. To hear his own, impassioned opinions on intercultural relations from the mouth of an Amerindian was unsettling because even though it confirmed the rightness of those ideas, it undermined his capacity to determine his own experience as a cross-cultural traveler, for it demonstrated that the Indians were not naïvely receiving his cross-cultural advances. Catlin wanted to believe the people he visited were as yet uncontaminated by the realities of the frontier, so that he could define his own cross-cultural interactions. He knew this was utopian, not reality - no Amerindian he met read him as Amerindians had the first European explorers, centuries before – but it’s a conceit that motivated

him in his efforts to promote cross-cultural learning and respect in the contact zone. Still, while the Chief's awareness of the wrongs perpetrated against his people might have surprised Catlin, it was hardly unwelcome. A few years later, he would frequently and willingly interpret Indians' grievances for European audiences. What really disturbed Catlin was what preceded the condemnation of policy—the condemnation of his culture. Catlin had no scruples about criticizing the actions of his society, but he was able to detach those actions from the society itself; as much as he valued Amerindian culture, he was a believer in the inevitable march of progress. He had no wish to become an Indian, and his pride in his own cultural heritage was, in fact, partly what motivated his mission. He sought to “rescue” native cultures before they were inadvertently destroyed by mistaken policies of a few powerful parties in his native country; it was the most he could do to correct what he saw as an unfortunate wrong turn in the otherwise admirable history of western civilization.

The words of the Sioux Chief did, indeed, strike Catlin “with great force;” that he was “compelled” to acknowledge their truth was humbling. For an evening, at least, he was knocked out of his comfort zone, into a place where he gained a more nuanced perspective on the cross-cultural enterprise in which he has so confidently engaged for so long. The Chief gave the author a taste of his own medicine, for in the hundreds of pages and miles of travel that come before this exchange, Catlin dealt out innumerable “chapter[s] of questions” to Amerindian informants. Frequently, Catlin described scenes that resemble this one, casting himself as eager and attentive information seeker, surrounded by a “throng” of curious and impressed onlookers. Nor is this the first scene where he expresses his relief in “escaping” from said throng. This time, however, he escapes sheepishly—a humbled, dumbstruck would-be apologist hoping to slip away undetected, not a hounded but happy celebrity seeking a break from the crowds who make him the center of their admiring attention. The offended Chief's reply to his interrogator's unwelcome and judgmental comments effectively stopped them by forcing Catlin to put his foot in his mouth.

Catlin's inclusion of the incident, with its frank admission of his discomfiting comeuppance, among his concluding reflections is significant in that they lessen the impact of the occasional slips into ethnocentric judgments of Amerindian culture that appear in the preceding pages. As in his moments of vulnerability in the horse race, the O-kee-pa, and the dog feast, his discomfort indicates that Catlin has learned as much about himself as about the subject of his study. He does not admire every aspect of Indian-ness--or American-ness. Cosmopolitan exchange is not "all or nothing" and cosmopolitan advocacy is not about unqualified endorsement of *any* culture.

I conclude my discussion of Catlin's first book with an analysis of its most compelling picture of an Amerindian individual. To an extent, the trajectory of Assinneboin warrior Win-jun-jon reflected that of George Catlin. After visiting Washington, DC as part of a diplomatic delegation, he returned to his native lands to report what he saw there. The narration of his story is somewhat erratic, symptomatic, perhaps, of the stitched-together nature of the overall text, but also faithful to the chronology of Catlin's successive encounters with this individual who captivates him so. In effect, Catlin tells the story three times, at three different points in the book, and as a result, the reader can accept the Assinneboin traveler as counterpart and foil to the writer, and see, in the picture of disbelieving Indians who laugh at Win-jun-jon's enthusiasm for "civilized" ways, a foreshadowing of the powerful men in Washington who would similarly dismiss Catlin's enthusiasm for Indians.

Win-jun-jon first appears early in the book, when Catlin visits his tribe at the mouth of the Yellowstone. He provides a sketch, a formal portrait not particularly different from those included of other Assinneboin notables. At this point, Catlin uses a description of Win-jun-jon's return from his journey and reunion with his people as a means of illustrating Amerindian emotional stoicism. Dressed comically in a uniform of an officer of the U.S. military eccentrically accessorized, and carrying a keg of whiskey, a sword, and an umbrella, Win-jun-jon steps off the steamer. Catlin

continues his description thus:

In this plight and metamorphose, he took his position on the bank, amongst his friends—his wife and other relations; not one of whom exhibited, for an half-hour or more, the least symptoms of recognition, although they knew well who was before them. He also gazed upon them [...] as if they were foreign to him, and he had not a feeling or thought to interchange with them [...] a gradual, but cold and exceedingly formal recognition began to take place, and an acquaintance ensued, which ultimately and smoothly resolved itself.

(1:56)

The traveler's homecoming serves to illustrate Assiniboin customs surrounding public displays of emotion. To an American observer, the conduct of the reunited parties must surely have been unexpected and striking, the kind of instance that highlights a cultural difference that is non-threatening and so appealingly interesting. One wonders, though, how much of the scene was colored by the fact that for Win-jun-jon, it was not just a reunion, but what anthropologists name a reentry: a return to one's home after a sustained immersion in a foreign culture. Such reentries usually entail a period of adjustment and culture shock similar to that travelers undergo when entering and adapting to a foreign culture. Catlin hints that this might be so; Win-jun-jon does not settle quietly into his pre-travel routine, as the depiction of the reunion might suggest. On the contrary, he becomes "a wonderful sensation," constantly attracting "gaping and listless crowds" to whom he relates his experiences while away, which are received as "unintelligible and beyond their comprehension" (1:57). The uninitiated Assiniboin have no context for understanding, let alone evaluating, the stories of the wanderer, whom they dismiss as a liar and who "is now in disgrace." Catlin does not elaborate, but simply adds that "more of this curious occurrence and of this extraordinary man, I will surely give in some future epistles" (1:57).

Surely, he does. Two letters later, readers are re-introduced to Win-jun-jon. He figures as a

diversion when Catlin passes the Assinneboins again on his way to the Mandans. Catlin reports that his “friend Win-jun-jon [...] was still lecturing on the manners and customs of the ‘pale faces’ [...] As I before said, his theme seemed to be exhaustless, and he, in the estimation of his tribe, to be an unexampled liar” (1:67). Except for his observation that his costume has been damaged and his keg emptied, Win-jun-jon’s situation has not changed much since Catlin left him. Two aspects of this circumstance seem particularly intriguing: that Win-jun-jon keeps on “lecturing” though he is estimated a liar and disgraced, and that he keeps on drawing crowds of his fellow Assinneboin to hear him. Catlin’s reaction, too, is slightly different. Where before he found Win-jun-jon more to be “pitied than envied” (1:57) for having had the opportunity to travel east, since that travel has resulted in his loss of social connection, now he finds this “extraordinary man” to be “quite ridiculous” and “truly laughable” although the “poor fellow” also merits a sympathetic response (1:67).

Win-jun-jon clearly makes an indelible impression on Catlin, who could not have failed to recognize him as a fellow translator of cultures. Although the narrated paths of the two cosmopolitans do not, apparently, cross for a third time, Catlin by some means hears the sequel to Win-jun-jon’s story, and creates an occasion to weave it into the end of the book, as his tone is growing more consistently reflective. His adventures nearly completed, Catlin is sharing stories around a fire with a French trader who had often accompanied and aided him in his travels. This time, Catlin starts his relation of his story at a different time, and admits that he first met the Indian traveler as he prepared to depart for the east in St. Louis, where Catlin was taking a rest. Catlin painted him upon his arrival in St. Louis, and writes that the Assinneboin was mistrustful of the novel, white man’s art of portraiture; he agreed to sit only after strong encouragement, and solemnly arranged his native costume, as all Catlin’s subjects did, in a “classic and exceedingly beautiful” (2:196) manner. This full-body portrait is the second of Win-jun-jon that appears in the book; as previously mentioned, Catlin included a half-size sketch of him along with the other

Assineboins he documented during his visit to that tribe. After having his (second?) portrait taken, Win-jun-jon continued on to Washington, where he spent the winter, meeting the President, touring sites of interest, and socializing in polite society. Catlin encountered his friend again on his return trip through St. Louis and painted him once more, this time in his altered state: “a full suit of regimentals” acquired during his stay in Washington (2:196). Catlin describes Wi-jun-jon’s new dress in detail once again, amusing his listener by listing the beaver hat with two-foot feather plume, the lace collar, the silver medal and sword, the white kid gloves, and finally with the avowal that the Assinneboin was “strutting and whistling Yankee Doodle, along the deck of the steamer” looking like “puss in boots, precisely!” (2:197).

Catlin included sketches of both portraits, like before-and-after testimonials, in his book (192, plates 271-2) (Figure 1). Win-jun-jon wears a similar expression in both images, and poses in a similar manner, though the calumet pipe and buffalo robe he carries are replaced by an umbrella, a fan, and a cigar in the second. The second portrait also portrays corked bottles protruding from the rear pockets, just visible beneath Win-jun-jon’s uncut long hair. While the dress and alcohol are signs of their bearer’s crossing into the American culture he visited, the wild hair signifies that the transformation was not complete. Interestingly, the background in Win-jun-jon’s “before” portrait shows a city skyline closely resembling the Capitol, while in the second, the culture-crossed figure stands before a background of tipis; in both, the figure appears to be glancing back. The transformational nature of Win-jun-jon’s stay in Washington is clear; he arrived there in his native skin, and returns in that of a foreigner. Significantly, in the “after” picture, he is depicted leaning backward on the umbrella, which seems to prop him up from behind as if he’s unstable, either from the unaccustomed attire or the whiskey. Catlin’s narration begins lightly, with Win-jun-jon again an object of ridicule as the dandified, fish-out-of-water Indian. Catlin accompanies the traveler on his journey home, continually entertained by his bearing. Two thousand miles past St. Louis Win-jun-jon arrives at his home, and (no mention of the thirty-minute recognition period this time) proceeds

to relate his adventures in the east to his countrymen. None of his stories are accepted as truth, but his wife and other women in his tribe are dazzled by his wardrobe, which, to his dismay, they



271

G. Catlin

272

Myers & Co.

Figure 1: Two portraits of Win-jun-jon

immediately convert into a variety of brightly-colored native garments. At first, according to Catlin, he doesn't particularly notice these less than admiring responses to his return, for "his heart spoke freely and so effectually from the bung-hole of a little keg of whiskey, which he had brought the whole way" (198). When the keg is empty, Win-jun-jon resumes his native dress, and "began in his sober moments, to entertain and instruct his people, by honest and simple narratives of things and scenes he had beheld [...]; but which, (unfortunately for him), were to them too marvelous and improbable to be believed" (197). As readers have already learned, he loses his status as the chief's son, but now Catlin takes the story further. When his disgrace does not stop him from continuing his relations, some of the medicine men decide he could not be making up such stories, but rather must be conjuring them, and Win-jun-jon is made a medicine man. At first this is an improvement, but when the stories continue, and so his "medicine" is declared more and more powerful, he makes enemies within the tribe, and eventually, and shockingly to readers and to the French trader, who exclaims "I shall cry always!" is assassinated for being a "wizard" (200).

Catlin's reflections on the story of Win-jun-jon are surprisingly limited. The traveler's untimely and violent end seems to reinforce the dangerous potential of cross-cultural contact. Catlin doesn't articulate the cautionary tale entirely, but seems to see Win-jun-jon's tragedy as an illustration of the implications for cross-cultural explorers of widespread belief in the warning of the familiar proverb: old men and far travelers can lie with impunity. In a rare moment of self-conscious textuality, Catlin's friend and listener is "discouraged" about the book he knows is planned. Catlin tells him that the sad story cautions "against the *imprudence of telling all that you actually know*, and narrating all that you have *seen*, lest like him you sink into disgrace for telling the truth" (2:200). The moral attached to "The Story of Win-jun-jon" (2:180) might well undermine readers' acceptance of the ethnographic descriptions that Catlin has offered, and that is part of the point; there is a degree to which cross-cultural understanding is highly personal, and therefore difficult to share. Readers alerted and therefore sympathetic to this would be most likely to benefit

from Catlin's attempts at description of the foreign. Win-jun-jon was unwise in his failure to edit his impressions of foreign life for the home audience—or to prepare that audience for the difficulties they should expect in processing the information he offers. This is a lesson that, as we have seen, Catlin learned; the many instances in his book that display his sensitivity to the probable reactions of his audience demonstrate that, and his reiteration of the sad fate of the cosmopolitan Indian drive the point home.

The extent to which one's experience of a foreign culture can be communicated to others who have not shared in those experiences is limited, and this accounts, in part, for the contradictions, defensive rationalizations, and rambling reflections present in Catlin's accounts. As a pioneer in American ethnography, he faced a task that travel writers who direct their work to home-bound readers can't avoid: the unacknowledged naiveté of such readers must be dealt with, and foreignness presented in terms of the known. The psychological processes undergone by cross-cultural travelers like Win-jun-jon can be significant, and not so easily translated to the uninitiated. Catlin would later have some experience with the mistrust and disbelief "far travelers" can face once he sought recognition of his work. Here, though, he chalks the story of his Indian counterpart up to "that night's gossip" (2:200) and moves on to other subjects. Still, in a large book full of many varied characters and their histories, readers can't help but remember Win-jun-jon. Catlin's repeated mentions of his Assinneboin counterpart were an effort to send a message to readers, to warn them of the challenges of intercultural translation and ask them to be as sympathetic, and so as receptive, as they could be.

Although he casts the story as an amusing incident, when considered in terms of Catlin's career, Win-jun-jon's experience resonates as one of the most significant in *Letters and Notes*. The writer sympathizes with the Assinneboin's plight, as he understands what it's like to be dazzled by exposure to foreign cultures; indeed, that response is among the most defining characteristics of his identity. The impulse to process experience outside one's own culture by sharing it with

compatriots is all but irresistible. Earlier in his book, Catlin wrote that experience among the Amerindians provides a traveler possessing a “mind that can ruminate” with

endless entertainment in driving the quill when he gets back. The mind susceptible of such impressions catches volumes of incidents which are easy to write—it is but to unfold a web which the fascinations of this *shorn* country and its allurements have spun over the soul—it is but to paint the splendid panorama of a world entirely different from anything seen or painted before. (1:59)

The emotional intensity of Catlin’s response to his travels in Indian country impels his artistic expression, and the web metaphor implies that that impulse is an unavoidable one: he must write to free his soul. Catlin shared that enveloping influence of a felt “world entirely different” with Win-jun-jon; both men had “susceptible minds” that allowed cross-cultural experience to penetrate to core identity, and so could not resist sharing their impressions. While Win-jun-jon did not find a productive way to do so, Catlin’s response, combined with his artistic talent and political convictions, led him to make a career of that sharing. His inclusion of the example of Win-jun-jon, though, proves Catlin’s understanding that it wasn’t the Amerindians or their environment that so changed and inspired him, but simply the newness of that world. Such cross-cultural epiphanies were not available exclusively to white men traveling to Indian culture, but, potentially, to anyone leaving the confines of his or her home culture.

“My transatlantic life”: Catlin in Europe

Between the event-filled years of travels he described in his two major books, Catlin spent about eighteen months polishing and exhibiting his paintings, writing his first book, and lobbying the U.S. Congress to purchase his collection. His exhibition opened in New York City in the fall of 1837 and drew large audiences but closed abruptly in January of 1838 when Catlin was assigned to

paint leaders of the recent Seminole uprising for the Secretary of War (Roehm 125). Surely he hoped that such cooperation would increase the chances that government officials would look with favor on his proposal that his collection be used to establish a National Museum, and when Congress set aside discussion of the purchase, Catlin took his collection to Washington, hoping to win legislators' favor. He received praise for his work but no action on its purchase, so he moved the gallery to Baltimore and then Boston and Philadelphia. Successful receptions in each of these cities did not change the government's decision; there were too many lawmakers who supported anti-Indian law policies for any vote in favor of "Indian-loving" Catlin to pass (Sarton 83). When the artist announced he would take his collection to London, the press clamored against its loss, but no purchaser appeared. Catlin left New York in November 1839, on a packet that also carried eight tons of his collection.

It was his first time leaving the continent, but Catlin's deep engagement with Amerindian cultures had convinced him of the value of respectful study of foreignness. His insistence that Amerindians should be allowed to be free of colonizing influences and their culture studied for its own sake, was avant-garde. When he sailed for Europe, Catlin's agenda was to use foreign interest in the preservation of native cultures – and by extension, in his own project – to leverage his acceptance and his collection's purchase by his own government. His lifelong association with indigenous peoples provided another layer of differentiation between American and European cultural identities at a time when many American tourists traveled to Europe to become "cultured." He was aware that he was no ordinary American tourist, as he sought to teach more than learn from Europeans. With nineteenth-century Americans so self-conscious about the performance of their national identity on an international stage, Catlin's individual example of productive intercultural negotiation demands attention.

There is much in Catlin's European book that smacks of typical chronicles of European travel. It begins conventionally, with a chatty relation of the "common-place" (1848:1:4) voyage

from New York, although the composition of his fellow-travelers differs in that the most notable (and boisterous) are the two caged grizzly bears that form part of his collection. Catlin works to differentiate his narrative from that of a tourist. The bears' presence serves not only as a novelty that sets Catlin's passage apart - yes, he admits, everybody complains about a rough crossing, but mine had bears! - but also as a field upon which he can demonstrate his unusual capabilities. He alone has the wherewithal (and, indeed, the desire) to manage the animals. Catlin's is the self-assured voice of the seasoned traveler. Although he has never before crossed the ocean, his travels in America have given him the confidence of one accustomed to being a foreigner. His description of a brief visit with the steerage passengers highlights Catlin's persistently ethnographic tendencies. Catlin would never have had the opportunity to interact with his humbler fellow-travelers had he not, one stormy night, been unable to make his way to other shelter, and dropped into the steerage hold. When the hatch is closed for the night, trapping him in the wrong part of the ship, he does not complain but rather expresses his "amusement" at the motley and crowded scene, which he deems "a subject of curious interest for a stranger so suddenly to be introduced to" (9-10) and relates his impressions of the eccentric and, presumably, otherwise unseen passengers. The steerage episode gives readers unfamiliar with Catlin a hint of his cosmopolitan capacity and a glance into his unreserved character, while reintroducing more experienced readers to Catlin's propensity for exploration and willing interaction with different kinds of people.

Upon his arrival in Liverpool, Catlin's simultaneously bewildered and self-assured reaction matches those commonly described in nineteenth-century travel accounts of Americans touring Europe for the first time, and, indeed, those of most travelers entering a foreign system. His adjustment period was marked by signs of disorientation. As he acclimated to English society, he exhibited his culture shock by complaining of the dirtiness of London (15), falling prey to a scam of street beggars (17), and causing an accident by driving on the wrong side of the road (28). This last was particularly embarrassing, as his driving mishap attracted a disapproving crowd. Catlin

was “mortified,” as the crowd did not grasp that “ignorance rather than carelessness” (29) had caused his mistake. Catlin understood that he was in the wrong, and he understood the reason why; he hadn’t yet learned enough about the way things were done in London. When the less-than-cosmopolitan crowd disparages him as a “Yankee,” tying his responsibility for the damage to another vehicle to the U.S. national debt, he gives up in frustration—but carefully listens when his footman takes “especial pains” (30) to teach him the rules of the road. The episode demonstrates Catlin’s understanding of the process involved in entering foreign cultures, and his recognition that he has done so in traveling to Europe.

Unlike more hapless tourists, though, Catlin learned the ropes quickly, and gained confidence in even the highest circles of society. Of course, it was not only his cross-cultural experience but also sheer financial need that facilitated the transition, as Catlin needed to mount his exhibition successfully to pay the debts he incurred daily. He opened his exhibit in London in February of 1840, displaying his paintings and giving lectures alongside Indian handicrafts. For the next two years, Catlin showed his collection on his own, aided only by an American assistant. In an effort to draw more paying visitors, Catlin also hired English workers, painted and dressed them, and trained them to pose in *tableaux vivants* illustrating scenes from Amerindian life.

Catlin thought of his two major books as accounts of his eight-year experiences in the “*Far West*” and the “*Far East*” (1848:1: v) – that is, along and beyond the American frontier, and in Europe. To him, North American Indians were the subject of both. In the preface to the second book, Catlin explains that, traveling with Amerindians, he saw a side of their culture he hadn’t had the opportunity to observe while in their territory. Just as travel had tested his mettle, it tested theirs, and Catlin was not disappointed.

These scenes have afforded me the most happy opportunity of seeing the *rest* of Indian character (after a residence of eight years amongst them in their native countries), and of enabling me to give to the world what I was not able to do in my former work, for the want

of an opportunity of witnessing the effects which the exhibition of all the ingenious works of civilized art, and the free intercourse and exchange of opinions with the most refined and enlightened society, would have upon their untutored minds. The reader will therefore see, that I am offering this as *another Indian book*, and intending it mostly for those who have read my former work, and who, I believe, will admit, that in it I have advanced much further towards the completion of a full delineation of their native character. (vii)

Not surprisingly, Catlin's admiration for the Amerindians did not diminish when they were studied outside of their home setting. Catlin cast the Amerindian presence in Europe as an experiment in which he could gather evidence to support a central thesis of his earlier book: Native Americans merit respectful attention. In part, this is in response to critics who derided him as "Indian-loving," implying that his enthusiasm for native causes was either a way to promote his artistic career or a result of his seduction by the adventurous life he was able to lead on the frontier. Some of his hearers – including, presumably, those who had opposed the U.S. government's purchase of his collection – had been skeptical of his positive portrayal of the character of native culture. Catlin explains that these critics "believed I had probably been led to over-estimate it, from the fact that I had beheld it all in the wilderness, where there was nothing better to contrast it with" (viii). Catlin sold his second book, the lengthy title of which begins, after all, "Adventures of the Ojibbeway and Ioway Indians," as a continuation of his ethnographic study.

Scholarship on that second book has accordingly focused on Catlin's experience as the manager of the Amerindians in Europe, analyzing the reactions of these living showpieces to European culture. Kate Flint has pointed out that the book's depiction of Amerindian encounters with Victorian society is an intriguing example of a politically-charged "contact zone" (508) and called for further investigation of the text as it can provide a glimpse into Catlin's exhibition and the tourism of the Amerindians as a site of cross-cultural exchange, asking not only how European audiences responded to the show but "what did Native Americans bring away from their

encounters, and what traces of this legacy passed into the continuing history of cross-cultural relations with Anglos?" (511). Such a counter-historical tactic is, indeed, a useful one in reading Catlin's text, and not dissimilar to my own approach. Significantly, Flint acknowledges that the "Indians" that make the subject of this book might also be "homogenized tribal subject[s]" being constructed for consumer pleasure (510), which suggests that the layers of mediation involved weaken the force of Catlin's presentation of the Amerindian perspective. The fact is, little is known about the individual lives of the Amerindians who ended up in Catlin's group. Catlin himself is the subject of my interest and analysis of the book. He had, in fact, no intention of exhibiting or traveling with Indians in Europe, but he twice encountered groups brought over by American speculators, and agreed to include them in his exhibitions and accept responsibility for their care, tempering criticism of exploitation faced by their original "agents."

Christopher Mulvey has analyzed Catlin's Europe book in the wider context of nineteenth-century American travel writing, comparing its depictions of the Amerindian response to Europe with those in writings of American citizens as well as recovered narratives written by Amerindians themselves. He links the Indians' critiques of European culture – most notably visible poverty, prevalent alcoholism, and frivolous materialism – to similar critiques in writings by other travelers, pointing to a generic formulation of such responses and suggesting that Catlin's presentation of the Indian point of view is an effort to seek from a third group a "second opinion" to confirm the negative pronouncements made by Americans on European culture. Mulvey concludes that Catlin, in serving as mediator between cultures, was able to present the U.S. as an "ideal middle" (261). Mulvey attributed that balanced status to the book's ongoing comparison of social conditions in "civilized" Europe and "savage" Indian territories; throughout the two thirds of the narrative that deal with the artist's shepherding of the Amerindians around Europe there is a discussion of the relative moral merits of the two cultures presented via the mutual responses of Amerindians and Europeans to one another. As mediator, Catlin stands between, so the sum of these comparisons

may have led readers of the book to see American society as a middle ground between the refinement and decadence of European culture and the harsh but more natural and honorable realities of the culture then universally called “savage.” Still, it is clear that Catlin viewed the Indian response to Europe in terms of a civilization versus wilderness division which trumped distinction between Euro-American cultures by placing whites on one side and Amerindians on the other; he never shied from implicating Americans and U.S. policy in the wrongs “civilization” had committed against the Amerindians.

Catlin did not have a chance to know Amerindian visitors in eastern cities; he did not include living subjects in his American exhibitions and only did so in Europe when pressed. As I’ve discussed, in his first book, he discusses similar critiques (of the impoverishing use of alcohol and the abandonment of moral priorities), often via Indian voices, about the United States as he does about Europe in his second book. The repeated interactions of the Indians with clergy of various sects serve to illustrate this move. Catlin does not participate in these meetings, but only records the conversations. As a result, readers “hear” Amerindian voices seconding the condemnation of missionary practices in Catlin’s earlier book. After the Iowa war-chief details the wrongs done to his tribe by religious men, he explains in frustration: “The Indians never urge white men to take up their religion, they are satisfied to have them take up a different road, for the Indians wish to enjoy their hunting grounds to themselves in the world to come” (1848:2:61). The Iowas are irritated by the dogged attempts by English Christians to convert them, but they recognize that it’s American missionaries who are implicated in the social ills of tribal life. While they identify surface-level differences between European countries, the “culture” they are absorbing is, to them, that of white men in general.

I argue that Catlin’s between-ness was personal; he himself, rather than his country as a whole, offered an ideal middle ground between what were perceived to be two very different cultures. Catlin presented himself and was generally received by Europeans as a heroic, model

American citizen. Throughout his career, though, he remained dissatisfied with his reception in his own country. The symbol of that reception was the failure of the U.S. government to purchase his collection and use it to establish a national museum. To Catlin, that failure was not only a personal one, but also and more importantly an indication of a wider refusal of his countrymen to acknowledge the value of Amerindian cultural heritage to the developing cultural identity of the new nation. His repeated efforts to educate anyone who would listen about Amerindian culture were not so much advocacy as a sort of indoctrination. If Americans could understand the culture of the indigenes they had displaced, they could both appropriate aspects of the identity of the “noble savage” - from hygiene habits to the proper ownership of the land - and do all that could be done to atone for the injustices that had been wrought upon him. Catlin’s desire to establish a national museum to display Amerindian culture harmonizes with theories of the imaginative, imperializing appropriation that accompanied the decimation of native American populations. Further, the cross-cultural understanding that would enable that appropriation would lead to other opportunities for cultural brokerage, and posit that the identity of Americans on the world stage should be a cosmopolitan one. His desire to limit the westward expansion of the U.S. demonstrated his hope that further cross-cultural damage could be avoided. Catlin believed his model of cross-cultural exploration and negotiation demonstrated the potential of cosmopolitan American cultural identity. He was hopeful his American readers would correct their course and attain that potential.

Catlin is interested in the reactions of Europeans to Indians and vice versa, and he is interested in how Europeans perceive him as an American. Above all, though, Catlin uses Europe as so many nineteenth-century writers and artists did: as a means of improving their reputation in the United States. Knowing and being known abroad was thought to be an aid in growing an American audience. If it didn't work, at least the cost of living in Europe made maintaining a certain lifestyle there, even as a “starving artist,” practicable; later in life, Catlin would spend two years in Brussels for just this reason.

There is a hint that he, and not the Amerindians whose culture he's presenting, is the real object of interest in his text in a comment made by a female visitor to his exhibition. Catlin periodically complains of the relentless attention he gets from English women, who seem intent on achieving the social coup of his presence at their dinner tables, and he admits that, when tired, he resorts to the ungentlemanly expedient of hiding around corners to avoid feminine admirers. Usually, though, he does his duty and engages politely with as many visitors as he can. In one instance, he approaches a "fashionably-dressed" lady who is admiring his paintings. She remarks: "Oh, I am so happy to have the honour of speaking to you—you have made all of these paintings?...These Indians are curious fellows, and well worth seeing, but I consider you ten times more of a curiosity...Oh, I do think you are one of the wonders of the world—and not a grey hair on your head yet!" (1848:2:67). Even though she ends up as the butt of one of Catlin's jokes (it turns out she's made a mistake that Europeans in the text seem prone to make, and confused American Indians with those from India), he clearly enjoys the recognition of his personal role in the popularity of his exhibition. He may not be a "wonder of the world," but he certainly is a "curiosity."

Catlin's first two years in Europe, when he was situated as an American introducing English audiences to Indian-ness in the absence of Amerindians, are thus of particular interest. The exhibition was meant to be educational; Catlin was endeavoring, after all, "to inform the English people of the true character and condition of the North American Indians, and to awaken a proper sympathy for them" (vi). Practically, though, Catlin hoped that by exciting European interest in his project he could incite American support—so he knew he had to be a showman as well as a teacher. As evidenced by his mishaps in English streets, even a veteran ethnographer could experience some bumps in the road while learning to maneuver in a new culture. Catlin was especially driven to learn, though, as not only did his financial situation require it, but his desired status as a cross-cultural expert demanded it. He presented himself as one who could translate Amerindian culture

for a foreign audience; too many missteps would undermine that position. So Catlin consistently presented himself as a confident, graceful traveler who often was forced to patiently counter the ignorance of the English audience on the peoples and cultures of his home country.

Catlin enjoyed the spotlight and the opportunity it granted him to point to English provincialism, but that was not enough of an adventure to keep him entertained. He was used to more exciting cross-cultural forays, and so decided to use his experience in the West to play with the English public's fascination with Indian culture. On several occasions, he did so by attempting to pass himself off as an Indian, which, to him, was the ultimate demonstration of his cosmopolitan accomplishments. Preparations for these appearances were painstaking, involving the careful selection of costume and props, the application of paint to all visible skin, and the rehearsal of speech, dances, and manners.

Catlin attended the Caledonian Ball with a friend, Charles A. Murray, whom he dressed and trained as a member of the "Bois Brûlé," a tribe known in Indian country for their services as interpreters. Thus, Murray could translate the Amerindian languages Catlin used into English, or, as he called it in an appropriation meant to suggest the weakening of British cultural supremacy, "Americaine" (1:71). According to Catlin, the initial fearful response of the elite partygoers to his surprise entrance was quickly replaced by fascinated interest. Unrecognized by even close associates, the "Indians" were a great attraction. Catlin delighted in his contacts with nobility, even when his identity was unknown: "The introductions I had on that night, to lords and ladies, and to dukes and duchesses, as *Na-see-us-kuk*,[...] were honors certainly that [...] I could never have aspired to under any other name" (1:74). When, after a vigorous dance, the "Indians" paint began to run, Catlin's game was up, and receiving due acknowledgement for his performance, he walked home, unable to find a cab. A quick learner, Catlin did not dance at the next ball he attended as "Na-see-us-kuk," and remained undiscovered. He reveled not only in this "joke" he could play on his foreign audience, but in the authenticity of the knowledge of Indian culture he thought enabled

it. That knowledge facilitated his access to the highest level of London society. Not only did the exotic behavior and appearance of the “Indians” immediately make them the center of attention wherever they went, but it also gained them free admission to exclusive events (Roehm 207). His wife accompanied Catlin to the fundraising “Polish Ball” in Indian guise, because she was “inspired to see the splendor of the scene” (1848:1:88).

He enjoyed the close encounters with the English upper crust that his masquerades enabled; as “Na-see-us-kuk” he could suspend the careful manners he had to maintain as George Catlin, gentleman artist. He resorted to appearing in Indian guise, however, only during the first phase of his sojourn abroad, as if simultaneously to deal with the anxiety of being a new arrival on the European scene and to test his ability to move between cultures. The elaborate and only partly successful “joke” he plays on the unwitting partygoers shows his knack for using laughter – even at his own expense – as a therapeutic means of dealing with the uncomfortable vulnerability that arises from moving through an unfamiliar cultural milieu. Pretending to go native, however, was not the only way that Catlin could demand the attention of elite Europeans, and once his exhibition was well under way, he no longer displayed his Amerindian wardrobe on his person.

Casting his model of American cultural identity in an international context against those displayed by other visitors from the U.S. was an effective means of highlighting its desirability. That Catlin was conscious – and proud – of his transformation from bewildered, fresh-off-the-boat tourist to cosmopolite American in England is clear in these portrayals of his fellow Americans in Europe. His depictions of American naïveté match those often found in nineteenth-century travel writing: the unsophisticated bumpkin, so dazzled by the splendor of Europe that he does not even realize that he is a blundering fish out of water and an embarrassing representative of his country. They differ in his sharp differentiation between that persona and his own, well-defined alternative. Among the earliest – and gentlest – of the examples of this less-cosmopolitan American Catlin presents is his wife, who grossly underestimates the value of the gold she sees in the Bank of

England vaults (1848:1:87) [6]. In this case, Catlin is sympathetic; his wife has not been in England long, and her gaffe is similar to those he himself committed during his European initiation.

Catlin has less sympathy for an American businessman he encounters several years later while traveling ahead of his exhibition in Birmingham. Catlin has arrived late at the lodging house, but found it quite friendly and inviting. Enjoying his mug of ale and biscuit, he is addressed by a “very genteel-looking little man” (2:126). After explaining that he had overheard Catlin admit he was from New York, that personage delivers the following speech:

Look here, isn't this the darndest strange country you ever saw in your life? Rot 'em, I can't get 'em to do anything as I want it done; they are the greatest set of numbskulls I ever saw; now see, that little snub of a petticoat that's just gone out there, I suppose she is a cock of the walk here too; she's been all civility to you, but I've had a hell of a blowup with her; I was here not five minutes before you by the watch, and I spoke for a bed and a mug of ale; she brought me the ale, and I told her to bring me a tumbler and a cracker, and she turned upon me in a hell of a flare-up. She said she was very much obliged to me for my himpudence, she didn't allow crackers in her house, and as for “tumblers,” they were characters she never had anything to do with, thank God; they were a low set of creatures, and they never got any favour about her house. She wanted to know what quarter I came from. I told her I wasn't from *any quarter*, I was from *half*—half the globe, by God, and the better half too—wasn't I right, stranger? She said...she didn't hentertain blackguards, so there was my hale, and I might drink it hup and be hoff, and be anged, ...now isn't she a hard un? I don't suppose there is another place open in the darned outlandish place at this time of the night; what the devil shall I do? *You* are fixed snug enough. (2:126-7).

The businessman's rude response to his own inability to understand the landlady's accent and Briticisms has placed him in a predicament; he has been turned out after dark, with no idea how to find shelter. Oblivious to his own display of ignorance, he's at a loss as to the reasons that he has

been labeled a “blackguard.” Catlin makes it clear that his answer to the businessman’s query – “wasn’t I right, stranger?” – would not be affirmative.

But Catlin isn’t one to hold a man’s foibles against him, and he gracefully smoothes things over with the landlady, whose consequent helpfulness illustrates who exactly was the “numbskull” in the incident. As a result of the lateness, though, the only option is for the businessman to share Catlin’s bedchamber; Catlin magnanimously agrees to help his befuddled countryman. As the two are going to bed in the dark, the businessman, who in his agitated state has neglected to seek an introduction to his new acquaintance, mentions that he has heard that the Ioway Indians have been on exhibition in London. Catlin remains quiet when he claims to know the Indians, and even to be acquainted with Catlin himself, who is “all sorts of a man” (128). Amused, Catlin asks if he has ever seen the artist, and is answered “Seen him? Why, dam it, I raised him, as the saying is: I have known him all my life....He’s a roarer” (129). Still magnanimous, and exhausted, Catlin drifts to sleep without revealing his identity. When he wakes in the morning, though, he discovers that the businessman

being about the room a little before me, where my name was conspicuous on my carpet-bag and writing-desk, &c., had from some cause or other thought it would be less trouble and bother to wend his way amongst these ‘stupid and ignorant beings’ alone, than to encounter the Indians and Mr. Catlin, and endeavor to obliterate the hasty professions he had made. (129)

Gentlemanly Catlin treats his encounter with the “commercial traveler” as an amusing incident, but it’s hard to miss his presentation of this hapless blusterer as an alternative to his own version of the American in England. Easily recognizable as an early example of the oft-caricatured “ugly American,” the stranger is a variation of the “tourist” certain “travelers” look upon with disdain; his response to foreign culture is a neat opposite of Catlin’s. Catlin makes an effort to understand and use the local dialect, but the oblivious stranger fails to realize the dialect even

exists; Catlin speaks respectfully to the foreigners he meets, but the stranger barks at them; Catlin sees cultural differences as learning opportunities, but the stranger looks upon any deviations from his norm as inconvenient deficiencies. Catlin is the culturally-sensitive, self-assured cosmopolitan, and the stranger the unthinking, mercantile boor. Accepting Catlin's help, though, that boor seems to recognize the benefits of the more sophisticated approach: "'God knows I'm obliged to you. You've got a sort o' way o' getting along ur' these ere darned, ignorant, stupid sort o' beings'" (128). Presumably, too, the business-traveler's early-morning revelation of his embarrassing performance the night before made his own ignorance clear and served as a lesson in intercultural exchange and the pitfalls of acting on over-hasty assumptions. Catlin hoped that his "way" would inspire his fellow Americans to revise their approach to foreign encounters. The anecdote also answers his escapades in "passing" as an Indian. In those earlier episodes, his knowledge of Amerindian ways allowed him to fool less culturally-aware Englishmen; here, his knowledge of English ways sets him apart from his fellow Americans.

When Catlin was joined by groups of performing Native Americans for whom he acted as interpreter, his role as a cultural chameleon-performer shifted, and he crossed the channel in 1845 fixed as an American artist and ethnographer. His relation of the responses of the Iowas who performed at his gallery to European culture are interesting even if they are second-hand, but Catlin's ability to mediate between the two cultures is itself a fascinating performance of the appeal of his cosmopolitan identity. The increased foreignness of the French led him to tread more carefully, as if his own unfamiliarity with France made him receive French ignorance with more sensitivity. Catlin had learned the French language during his western travels from Canadian traders and Amerindians, but like many American visitors who had studied with non-native speakers, he had trouble understanding the French. He relied on Parisian friends, particularly Arthur Vattemare, for help with translation and in handling logistical arrangements. Still, it was not long before Catlin expressed frustration with French bureaucracy or laughed, along with the Iowas,

at the propensity of French women to lead dogs about the streets (2:220).

Catlin considered his relationship with the French sovereign, King Louis-Philippe, among the most meaningful of his experiences abroad, even though it ultimately proved neither profitable nor likely to aid his entrée into Parisian intellectual circles. He had referred to his audience with Queen Victoria as “an incident of my Transatlantic life, to which I shall ever recur with great satisfaction” (1:97). His letters to family at home revealed that, like many of his fellow Americans, he saw contact with the European aristocracy as triumphal, feeling both awe and pride at his success as a “greenhorn” and former “go-to-mill boy” in the brilliant courts (qtd Roehm 157, 234). In Louis-Philippe, though, Catlin found more than impressive condescension. Half a century before, the future Citizen-King had spent several years in the United States, during which time he made several forays into Indian country and so, according to a very pleased Catlin, knew “more of the great Western regions of America, and of the modes of its [sic] people, than one of a thousand Americans” (2:318). The two men shared a kindred interest in and affinity for Amerindians, and Louis-Philippe’s support meant Catlin and the Iowas were welcomed by the French nobility. Catlin emphasized the King’s cross-cultural awareness in his description of their first meeting when the Iowas were invited to the Tuileries:

His majesty in the most free and familiar manner (which showed that he had been accustomed to the modes and feelings of Indians) conversed with the chiefs, and said [...] “Tell these good fellows that I am glad to see them; that I have been in many of the wigwams of the Indians in America when I was a young man, and they treated me everywhere kindly, and I love them for it .[...]

“I am pleased to see their wives and little children they have with them here, and glad also to show them my family.” (2:211-2)

Catlin valued the King’s frank treatment of the Iowas, as it indicated that his cross-cultural experiences had left him able to see beyond limited social categories, and so demonstrated the

transcendent potential of Catlin's own approach to foreign encounters. The distinctiveness of Louis-Philippe's response was further highlighted by the gifts he later sent to the group: a souvenir medal for each man, woman, and child, inscribed with his or her Iowa (not translated) name. This royal gift was a telling cross-cultural exchange; the Amerindians displayed surprise and some discomfort at receiving such individual recognition, as their custom was to receive gifts only collectively, or via their chief (2:241), yet they were much happier with the medals than with their usual gifts from European admirers: bibles, which they could neither read nor sell, and accumulated in great number. The King's appreciation for the Indians led him to appreciate Catlin as well, and the two enjoyed discussions of their respective adventures.

Catlin's reaction to one of Louis-Philippe's stories provides a key to his perspective on the import of their relationship. Catlin writes that while listening to the King's anecdote of returning to Philadelphia from the (then) frontier, he "surprised his Majesty a little, and his listeners, and seemed to add a fresh interest to his narrative, by informing him that I was a native of Wilkesbarre, in the valley of Wyoming, and that while his Majesty was there I was an infant in my mother's arms, only a few months old" (2:285). Catlin's interjection may have seemed a charming comment upon the mysteries of fate. Who would have guessed that the paths of the humble American and the French royal would cross in two such different settings—that the sovereign entertaining and patronizing an artist in his palace may have, long ago, as a poor exile, stopped for refreshment at a wilderness cabin housing that very artist as an infant? In part, this is the kind of quaintly arresting, it's-a-small-world moment travelers often seek when getting to know new acquaintances; the effort to establish connections with those perceived as foreign is instinctive. Taken in the wider context of Catlin's writings and career, though, his revelation signals his belief in the power of his cosmopolitan enterprise. His presence in the French court, and the future King's presence in the backwoods of Pennsylvania, affirm the potential of America as a powerfully unifying global force. To Catlin, American destiny was cosmopolitan. The discovery that the King and the mill-boy (may)

have closed a circle in coming together to study the Amerindians demonstrates that cultural identity is fed, not diluted, when individuals cross culture lines, and that facility for cross-cultural exchange can allow Americans to subvert entrenched social limitations. Just as it had allowed Catlin to transcend the circumstances of his birth, cosmopolitan culture-crossing could lead to broader American success.

Initially, Catlin profited materially as well as philosophically from his royal connection, as the King purchased copies of several of his paintings. He commissioned more, but Catlin did not have time to deliver them – or receive payment for his work – before the King’s family was forced to flee the country, never to return. Catlin had significantly prolonged his stay in France in order to complete those paintings, but he was forced to leave the country immediately himself, fearful of repercussions of his known friendship with the king.

Even at the time of his first meeting with Catlin, Louis-Philippe’s increasing conservatism had caused him to lose public support. J.L. Rieupeyrou has pointed out that Catlin’s critical reception in Paris was not as roundly approving as he implied in his book, and suggested that Catlin was, indeed, a greenhorn in the vibrant and politically-charged Parisian cultural scene, where dissent was brewing against the King’s policies. Were it not for the interference of Georges Sand and Charles Baudelaire, he might never have had enough visitors to his gallery to attract the notice of the King in the first place; Catlin’s naturalistic paintings went against fashionable schools of art, which called for more allegorically classical themes and settings (200). Catlin’s lack of familiarity with European art and limited ability to read in French probably kept him unaware of these negative opinions of his artistic merit. Moreover, in his mind, his art was inextricably linked with his subject; he sought to record and display external subjects more than express his own imagination.

Catlin recorded his encounters with Sand only briefly and with Baudelaire not at all, but the two liberals – like the King - recognized a kindred spirit in the work of the American artist. The

originality of his subject (European artists likely painted their “savages” in classical settings because they had no idea how to do otherwise) and the lifelike use of form and color struck Baudelaire as appealingly bold, demonstrating a respect for individual expression and natural reality (Rieupeyrou 202). Sand arranged a meeting with Catlin, fascinated by the cultural difference on display, and hoping to learn more about Amerindians. Acknowledging their meeting in his book, Catlin regrets that their intercourse was limited by his embarrassingly limited ability to speak French (1848: 2:245); surely, had the artist not been preoccupied with the care of the Amerindians, the demands of his creditors, and the health of his family, he might have become more deeply involved in the dynamism of the Parisian cultural scene. Be that as it may, Sand and Baudelaire published their approval and support of the exhibition, and in so doing not only helped to keep that exhibition open, but also contributed to the lasting European infatuation with the American west (Rieupeyrou 204). Even if he was not aware of its implications, Catlin’s association with these two luminaries points to the iconoclasm of his endeavors. Just as Sand and Baudelaire sought, respectively, to revolutionize social realities and poetic art in France, Catlin sought to model a different kind of cultural sophistication to his contemporaries.

Like any serious traveler with a deeply cosmopolitan bent, Catlin was tangibly affected by his exposure to foreign cultures. He was eager not only to learn about other ways of life, but also to extract those features of foreign cultures that impressed him, adapting them into his own cultural identity. During his earliest explorations of the foreign, as a visitor among the Amerindians, he’d been unencumbered by the constant logistical considerations he faced in Europe, and he had moved beyond passive observation to active learning. This deeply personal engagement taught him the potential for self-development offered by cross-cultural exchanges, a lesson he often applied practically. Sometimes, the benefits of that application were immediately apparent, as when, traveling with the Puncah, Catlin despairs when pain in his exhausted feet causes him to fall behind. Told by a sympathetic “half-breed” that he “must ‘*turn [his] toes in*’ as the Indians do”

(1841:1:219, emphasis in original), Catlin took the advice immediately, and happily walked with the foremost in the group the rest of the journey. A footnote on the same page signals a broader insight he gained from the successful experiment: “man *can* walk with his toes turned out if he chooses, if he will use a stiff sole under his feet, and will be content at last to put up with an acquired deformity of the big toe joint.” Such reflection indicates that Catlin’s cultural receptivity went beyond a cosmopolitan respect for cultural difference; he was willing to engage in real exchange by adapting his own practice in accord with lessons learned from foreign others. Persistence in one’s own ways when adaptation to those of another would be an improvement is an option—but it leads to bunions. Catlin’s hope was that Americans would not be so painfully obstinate.

The concluding line of Catlin’s last book reads: “If I were to [...] bequeath to posterity the most important Motto which human language can convey, it should be in *three words -- shut--your--mouth*” (1873:91; emphasis in original). The prevailing sense of the expression lies in a proverb Catlin heard among the North American Indians: “If you would be wise, open first your eyes, your ears next, and last of all, your mouth, that your words may be words of wisdom, and give no advantage to thine adversary” (ibid). However wise that sentiment may be, the book, Shut Your Mouth and Save Your Life (1861), was an argument for adoption of Amerindian breathing and sleeping practices. Catlin used anecdotal and statistical evidence to assert the absence in Amerindian cultures of many ailments that plagued Euro-Americans: consumption, pneumonia, tooth decay, back pain, insomnia, snoring, and even lunacy. He then attributed all of these to habits of mouth breathing and improper sleep positioning, telling his own story along with illustrations from various Amerindian tribes. Just as he (re)learned to walk from Amerindians, he learned to sleep and breathe through his nose, and subsequently enjoyed better health. The science contained in the book may be dubious, but its overall message – that much can be gained by cross-cultural exchange – is in line with Catlin’s life work. The revelation that Amerindians refer to whites not

only as “pale faces” but also as “black mouths,” in reference to the habit of mouth breathing, which seems fearsomely unattractive and exposes often-decaying teeth (1873:49), is meant not only to touch readers’ vanity, but also to surprise them into paying attention to foreign perspectives. He refers specifically to Amerindian cultures when he declaims:

In order to draw a fair contrast between the results of habits amongst the two Races, it is necessary to contemplate the two peoples living in the uninvaded habits peculiar to each and it would be well also, for the writer who draws those contrasts, to see with his own eyes the customs of the Native Races, and obtain his information from the lips of the people themselves, instead of trusting to a long succession of authorities, [...] when the original one has been unworthy of credit, or has gained his information from unreliable, or ignorant, or malicious sources. (5)

Catlin’s main assertion here, as in his earlier book, is the long failure of Americans to engage culturally with the Amerindians, and his underlying plea is for more meaningful cultural exchange. The potential for improved health is but one example of the benefits of such exchange and the opportunities missed when it is neglected. Catlin was well aware of its moral value as well, as demonstrated by the claim that those who perpetuate stereotypes are “malicious.” He is, of course, the writer who has, in his lifetime of extensive travel, “contemplated” different cultures, and so the one who can fairly compare them. These comparisons do not end in knowledge of foreign cultures, for that knowledge leads true cosmopolitans to challenge their own ways. Catlin expressed that philosophy quite simply at the conclusion of his *Europe* book, writing that in order for a man “to know how his own city and country actually look, and how his countrymen act and live, he should see how cities and countries look, and how people act, in other parts of the world” (1848:2:306). Aware of the fascination with the idea of Indians responding to “civilization,” he asked Americans to put themselves in a similar position, and seek an understanding of foreign modes--even if it was only by studying his work. The reward, he knew, was a clearer perspective

on “the strange medley of human existence” (ibid.).

Appiah explains that cosmopolitanism begins when culturally different individuals find ways to identify with one another. George Catlin was adept at making such connections, whether he was attending a royal court or an impromptu horse race. He shared his energy, his curiosity, his art, and his aches and pains with Indians. He may not have shared the fate of his Assineboin counterpart Win-jun-jon, but the enthusiasm he felt for Amerindian cultures was often misunderstood, and in his lifetime, he faced, in the end, a similar lack of appreciation. Although he’d hoped that it would be enlightening, audiences responded to his gallery as entertainment. As a result, his cause was easily passed over when more pressing concerns arose, and Catlin dealt with a career-long struggle to support himself and his work [7].

Though Catlin published reams of text, he was not a writer by profession. He was always absorbed in his painting, and in the logistics of the near-continuous travel that produced his knowledge of his subject. These realities lead me to inquire how figures who saw themselves as working in a more purely literary realm responded to the issues of cross-cultural exchange that so drove Catlin. Writers like James Fenimore Cooper and Margaret Fuller were engaged in European political and cultural affairs in a way that Catlin couldn’t afford. While their experiences of cross-cultural exchange may not have been as colorful as Catlin’s, they may have been even better positioned to respond to the idea of a cosmopolitan American cultural identity. Their imaginative responses to foreignness underscore and complicate the painter’s representation of intercultural exchange. There is no evidence that George Catlin had more than a passing familiarity with the work of James Fenimore Cooper, whose cosmopolitanism is the subject of my next chapter. The artist-ethnographer was too focused on his business with Amerindian cultures to spend much time reading newspapers, let alone novels. While the trajectories of the two men differed, they are linked by a common interest in the nature of cultural identity, the instabilities of its meaning in an American context, and the power of cross-cultural learning.

Notes

1 Catlin hardly figures in discussions of American art of his time, although his work is always noted in commentary on the history of American ethnography. Catlin's work was contemporaneous with that of the American artists known as the Hudson River School; like him, these artists were interested in cultivating a sense of American cultural identity, and their paintings were admired for their depictions of natural grandeur as the source of American sublimity and inspiration. Native Americans figured on occasion in their work as well. In general, though, these depictions resemble those in Thomas Cole's series *Landscape Scene[s] from [Cooper's] Last of the Mohicans* (1826-7) or Albert Bierstadt's *Indian Encampment* (1861), in which Indian figures are portrayed from the distance and are small in scale. These Indians are interesting but minor aspects of scenic vistas; Catlin's are focal points. The majority of his paintings are portraits; his landscapes are usually composed to show large-scale Indian activities, like hunts of vast herds of buffalo. His work as a painter gave him a reason, beyond curiosity, to spend time with the native peoples he visited in the American west. Although the merit of his art was recognized by some of his contemporaries, he was not a part of the (often expatriate) mainstream art world and had no connections with other American artists; Catlin was more an ethnographer with a flair for showmanship and public relations and a passion for the subject of his studies than an artist. Culture and politics were more important in his work than aesthetics. Lewis Cass, the former superintendent of Indian Affairs, wrote Catlin on the publication of his first book, which included sketched versions of many of his paintings, to commend him on the "admirable fidelity of [his] drawings and book [...] They are equally spirited and accurate; they are true to nature. Things that *are*, are not sacrificed, as they too often are by the painter, to things as in his judgment they should be" (qtd Catlin 1852 I:59). Catlin was more interested in people than landscape, and his art was more instrument than mission. For more on Catlin's artistic production, see the Smithsonian's

George Catlin and His Indian Gallery (W.W. Norton, 2002) or Susanna Reich's Painting the Wild Frontier: The Art and Adventures of George Catlin (Clarion Books, 2008).

2 Around 1820, the study of culture became a “science” rather than a solely intellectual pursuit. That meant that practicing ethnography meant making observations in the field, rather than culling information from existing texts. For a discussion of the emergence of ethnography as a discipline in an American context, see Robert E. Bieder’s Science Encounters the Indian, 1820-1880: The Early Years of American Ethnology (U. OK Press, 1989).

3 Amerindian oral traditions may have warned against strange-looking invaders from the across the sea. See James Axtell’s Beyond 1492 (1992) or Hampton Sides’s more recent Blood and Thunder (2006).

4 There were several notable sequels to Catlin’s relation of the O-kee-pa. Henry Schoolcraft, as head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, claimed Catlin’s descriptions were fantastic invention. The resultant damage to the artist’s reputation likely lost him votes when Congress was deciding whether or not to purchase his collection. Marjorie Catlin Roehm has pointed out that prior to making his assertions, Schoolcraft had been denied permission to use Catlin’s sketches in his own sociological work on Native Americans, and so made his claims in order to discredit a competitor. Catlin also related the full details of the O-kee-pa in a private lecture in England, and was taken aback when an English publisher subsequently brought out an unexpurgated version. On the advice of friends, Catlin responded with an illustrated pamphlet of his own.

5 In expressing sentiments like these, Catlin was participating in a tradition of calling for reformed intercultural relations by the casting the “heathen” as the truest followers of Christ; see

the work of Indian ministers Samson Occom and William Apess, or novelists Catharine Sedgwick and Lydia Maria Child.

6 The value of money was a particularly sensitive issue for Clara, as for other Americans in Europe, since failures of the United States National Treasury had made foreign creditors suspicious. Embarrassment about this circumstance, and an awareness of Britain's Bankruptcy laws, which were far stricter than those at home, was unsettling to tourists. In letters home Clara mentioned her uneasiness about their susceptibility to the "harpies of the law" (qtd Roehm 316) and her husband wrote "The awkward condition of the Government's finances...has brought on an almost national Bankruptcy, and brought us under that stigma abroad that makes an American feel unpleasant abroad—his country in disgrace & himself in a bad odour wherever he walks" (qtd 236).

7 Congress twice failed to approve purchase of his collection, and in 1852, Catlin, who had run up too many debts in confidence his work could be sold, was imprisoned by creditors in London. His debts paid off by a Philadelphia philanthropist who put his collection in storage, Catlin spent the next fifteen years traveling extensively in South America and painting and writing in Brussels, where he appreciated the quiet life and low cost of living, in modest quarters he shared with pet mice (Roehm 375). He mounted a reasonably successful exhibition of new work in Brussels in 1871. A relative paid for the return of the artist and his works to New York, where he briefly showed an exhibition that received little notice (409). He entertained hopes that Congress would yet purchase his work for display at the National Museum, but the government – as the country – had other concerns. He died in 1872 and was buried in Brooklyn, in a grave that went unmarked until 1961 (411). His collection was finally donated to the Smithsonian in 1879.

“So difficult it is for Countries to know one another”: Cooper’s Cross-Cultural Insights

When James Fenimore Cooper arrived in Europe for what would become a seven-year stay in 1826, he had, like Catlin, professional motives. He needed money, and had secured a minor diplomatic post; he also wished to oversee foreign publication of his works. Cooper was also interested in experiencing Europe and in furthering the educations of his children. A man of letters and friend of Lafayette, he quickly became aware that his status as a (minor) celebrity brought with it the opportunity and the burden of representing his home country on an international stage. That position, and the close and sustained contacts with various kinds of Europeans it entailed, reinforced Cooper’s sensitivity to questions of cultural identity, raising the stakes by holding “American” culture up for international scrutiny. In his recent biography, Wayne Franklin declares that when Cooper returned from Europe he was “healthier; he was sharper culturally, deeper politically, shrewder (if not yet cynical) in moral terms” (521). He’d acquired strong views on the proper performance of American-ness at home as well as in the wider world. Cooper’s diverse work continually addressed issues of cultural identity, suggesting his desire not only to participate in the debates about culture that marked his age but also to influence his countrymen to think more critically about cross-cultural issues and consider the implications of their own national identity.

Although less so than Catlin, Cooper was identified with Amerindian cultures. The transatlantic journey of The Pioneers (1823) had preceded his, and its compelling native characters made a fast and lasting impression on European imaginations. By 1826 Cooper had published six novels; except for Precaution (1820), all had dealt with identifiably American themes, opening the wilderness frontier, the sea, and U.S. history as new territories for fiction. Throughout his career, intercultural encounters were all but omnipresent in Cooper’s work. Whether the cultures in play were Amerindian, American, European, something else, or something in between, cultural differences were frequently the primary source of narrative conflict.

Wherever they have appeared in early reviews or recent criticism, conversations about Cooper and his work have been linked to their distinct and iconoclastic American character, so Cooper seems tied to the early development of the cultural identity of the United States. Cooper's cosmopolitanism led some to suspect his loyalty to American ways. His patriotism was the focus of early critical discussion. The Memorial of James Fenimore Cooper (1852) records the thoughts of leading figures presented at a series of public remembrances in the year that followed his death. Washington Irving, in absentia, asserted that Cooper “emphatically belong[ed] to the nation” (12) while George Bancroft, introducing a resolution to raise a monument, asserted “that he was an embodiment of the American feeling, and truly illustrated American greatness” (17). Edward Everett said of his works that “there [was] nothing more purely American, in the highest sense of the word,” (10) and William H. Prescott seconded, claiming that “his writings are instinct with the spirit of nationality” (31). Cooper's memorialists emphasized his nationality and work for his country over any other aspect of his life and writerly career.

What made Cooper so “American”? What kind of “Americanness” did he represent? Why was that Americanness so important? This chapter will explore how James Fenimore Cooper worked to define American cultural identity against and alongside foreign models, and investigate his vision of a brand of American nationalism that would find power in intercultural exchange and posit this empowering cosmopolitanism as an essentially American capability. After a brief discussion of the ideas of literary critics whose ideas most inform my own, I begin with a treatment of the concept of culture in the often-discussed Leatherstocking series. In these Cooper clearly recognized that cross-cultural encounters formed American identity from the start and worked (as would Catlin) against the prevailing tendency to denigrate, dismiss, and destroy Amerindians. Then I turn to Cooper's engagement with cultures that would have seemed less “foreign.” Like many of his countrymen, Cooper felt he had a European (specifically British) heritage, but had developed that into something distinctively American, and so found cultural differences between

Europe and the U.S. simultaneously surprising and essential [1]. Efforts to encourage international acceptance of American culture as a distinctive, worthy addition to the catalog of world cultures were often hampered by cross-cultural missteps and failures. More than most, Cooper understood the process of exploring foreignness as well as the value of the experience, but found that understanding difficult to communicate to less-cosmopolitan audiences. I tackle this aspect of Cooper's cross-cultural engagement where he did, in two works that participated in the ongoing transatlantic squabble over the insinuations about U.S. culture in travel writing by Europeans. In Notions of the Americans (1828) and "Point de Bateaux à Vapeur—Une Vision" (1832), Cooper advanced American arguments against the propriety and usefulness of such judgments. To borrow a metaphor from Paul Giles, in these works Cooper placed a sort of double-sided mirror (2) over the Atlantic that Americans could use to see how they looked to Europeans and vice versa. Both works identify communication failures as the reasons underlying cross-cultural conflicts. Cooper's later engagements with similar subjects, in Homeward Bound and Home As Found (1838), took these transatlantic discussions to a different level. Remaining staunchly American, Cooper was less interested in defending his country from European "attacks" than in understanding the differences that inspired them; his argument, aimed at Americans, was for a more enlightened U.S. culture—one that had the cosmopolitan skills required to command respect internationally. I find Cooper's ultimate understanding of "culture" as a moveable category of human difference in The Monikins (1835). Unusually fantastic, this novel emphasizes the destabilizing but productive effects of cross-cultural exploration. Finally, I offer a glimpse of the non-literary products of Cooper's travels: connections made with and (political) battles fought alongside Europeans.

Referring to Cooper as "the great American grouch" (52) in his classic study, D.H. Lawrence asserted that he suffered from a national affliction: the desire simultaneously to hold status as a quasi-aristocratic "gentleman" and to possess the perceived renegade freedom and self-

sufficiency of the frontiersman—to be at once the sophisticated European and the “blood-brother” (57) of the American Indian. Decades later, Richard Slotkin affirmed Cooper as preeminent and purposeful “mythologizer of the American frontier” (468). Slotkin explained that

the belief that a new nationality had been created in America, a new and better race of men, characterized the nationalistic fervors of the post-revolutionary and Jacksonian generations. [...] All men, individually and collectively, were engaged in becoming Americans—in making a new, American identity for themselves and, by extension, for the whole culture. (473)

In his analysis of the Leatherstocking novels, all of which dramatized the engagement of white settlers with Amerindians and the American landscape, Slotkin asserted that Cooper created therein a “paradigm of the historical experience of the whole nation in its acculturation to the Indian’s America” (498). According to Slotkin, Cooper instigated the appropriation of real or imagined characteristics of Amerindian culture into U.S. national identity, in a metaphoric consumption and digestion that paralleled the ways settlers cleared the resources of the landscape.

Jane Tompkins developed this line of thinking, linking it more closely than Slotkin had with the actual, multicultural world Cooper inhabited, moving scholarly discussion of the author away from literary theory and towards cultural studies. Limiting her analysis to The Last of the Mohicans, she assesses Cooper by understanding that he was “obsessively preoccupied...with the way the social world is organized” (99). Her conclusions about the novel’s particular message assign Cooper the following attitude about what America should look like:

the ideal form of human society consists neither in the obliteration of all [human] distinctions nor in the jarring of savage races, but rather in a proper respect for the “natural” divisions that separate tribe from tribe and nation from nation. [...] There will never be a time when men live together without distinctions. (116-7)

Tompkins’ assessment might seem overly simple, but she makes a key acknowledgment of

Cooper's understanding of his world. The notion of men living together with distinctions among them is an important one in understanding Cooper's stance on American cultural identity, and not just because of the way that identity seemed to be at stake. The call for acceptance and maintenance of social diversity – the single most important tenet of cosmopolitanism – was also a corrective to what Cooper identified as a dangerous misunderstanding of democracy—the idea that because all men were created equal, all men were the same, and efforts to rise above (or simply to differentiate oneself from) the crowd were undemocratic. Cooper's certainty of the odiousness of this philosophy is best embodied in Steadfast Dodge, the tedious butt of most of the jokes in Homeward Bound.

Cooper took his citizenship seriously and actively engaged with issues he felt were important; relishing his status as man of letters, he saw it as duty and privilege to represent his country as well as he could—which, in his opinion, was quite well. The writer was acting as intermediary between Europe and the United States. Cooper's ideas of what that representation meant were formulated by his experiences in a multicultural America and abroad. Cooper finalized publication of The Last of the Mohicans (1826) and wrote The Prairie (1827), while living with his family in Paris; when he thought about how to define American cultural identity, he often thought about Amerindian cultures. While Cooper had only passing encounters with Native Americans, his novels are drawn from accounts of those who did, and reveal a sincere desire to portray native cultures fully and fairly, and to offer these cultures as a valuable resource.

Cooper's Native "Foreigners"

The "foreign culture" most readily associated with Cooper is, of course, not foreign at all. The Amerindian presence is the key to the Leatherstocking novels, and undoubtedly the early source of their success. In his historical introduction to The Last of the Mohicans, James Franklin Beard quoted George Copway, a Chippewa chief who endorsed Cooper's portrayal of native

culture and called the author a “friend of the red man” (xv). Cooper’s portrayal of Indian culture so marked the Leatherstocking novels that it became conflated with the series’ American-ness and furthered the international obsession with the “Western” genre.

Critic Barbara Mann has pointed to surprisingly subversive aspects of Cooper’s presentation of cultural difference. She addresses the failure of literary scholars to mark the cross-cultural insights in Cooper’s work. The conflation of the Leatherstocking novels with mainstream culture causes aspects of the works that oppose national mythologies to be overlooked. The widespread lack of an understanding of Amerindian history and culture, Mann points out, has meant that “for all touted multiculturalism in academia today, there has been surprisingly little movement in the direction of assessing James Fenimore Cooper as an author ahead of his time in terms of cross-cultural applications” (“Man”). Cooper, she insists, understood the cross-cultural dynamics of his time better than we do—a simple enough idea, but one easily elided by well over a century’s worth of condescending assumptions that Cooper’s characters were idealized more than representational.

Mann does her part to remedy the situation by reading the Leatherstocking tales through a carefully restored nineteenth-century lens, thereby picking up on Cooper’s cues to assert that “Hawkeye was a half-breed” (“Man”). Mann’s textual analysis demonstrates that the ways racial and cultural distinctions are discussed in the novels indicate that Natty’s mixed character derives from nature as well as nurture, challenging conventional readings of Natty as a white man raised by and empathetic with Amerindians. Calling Natty’s identity into question opens the Leatherstocking novels to a field of inquiry into the history of American cultural identity, where they have always belonged; Cooper’s plots and characters play out the high-stakes multicultural world in which he lived. For Cooper’s audience, “the trail leading to Natty’s Native identity was actually quite broad, providing a portrait of a mixed-blood man desperately ‘passing for white’” (“Race” 157). Natty “lived and died alone in the only place that he could simultaneously stand and hide, those nooks

and crannies of the ever-shrinking ‘middle ground’ of European invasion” (“Man”). The invention of Natty Bumppo, therefore, indicates Cooper’s awareness of cultural crosscurrents in the early republic, and his sympathetic, admiring attitude towards the beloved character displays his capacity for sensitivity to the dire consequences of prejudice and discrimination.

Cooper was long “an active gatherer of Indian lore” (Franklin JFC 474). When he could, he arranged to meet with Amerindian delegations, and thought of such meetings as “learning opportunities” (475). Cooper’s knowledge of Amerindian culture is the subject of Mann’s “Spirits of Sky, Spirits of Earth: The Spirituality of Chingachgook” (2002), which interprets the behavior of Cooper’s Mohegan, Natty’s friend and counterpart in four out of five Leatherstocking novels, in the context of native religion. The life and death of this “noble savage” character, ultimately ruined by contact with white men and their alcohol, make more sense when understood in this way. From the point of view of Christianity, the self-destructive acts of “Indian John” are symptomatic of depression, the natural result of the loss of community and substance abuse that tormented him. Mann explains that Cooper’s study of the writings of Moravian missionary John Heckewelder [2] gave him an understanding of Amerindian belief systems, and that that understanding is evident in the trajectory of Leatherstocking’s sidekick. An informed close reading of The Pioneers, she writes, reveals

a fledgling grasp on James Fenimore Cooper's part of the spirituality of the eastern woodlands, insights caught courtesy of his able source on Native lore, John Heckewelder. To anyone with knowledge of woodlands spirituality, the scenes in the forest, cavern, and tavern convey a depth of character and a complexity of motive in Chingachgook that have been left unexplored by literary critics of the Leather-stocking Tales.[...] More often than one might expect, Cooper lifts the cultural veil to enter genuinely Native mindsets in the east. (“Spirits”)

As Mann demonstrates, Cooper’s Leatherstocking Tales are more than adventure stories set in the

backdrop of an expanding nation—they are laced with insights on the complex cultural dynamics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America. Cooper was evidently not only interested in Amerindian culture, but also in exploring how it interacted with European cultures, and what sort of “American” culture was emerging from that encounter.

Even in the Leatherstocking series, Cooper’s cross-cultural curiosity was not limited to Amerindians. He clearly portrayed a multicultural United States, and the diversity of his characters documents the coexistence of various cultural groups. To see it, one need go no further than the protracted opening scene of The Pioneers. When the Temples arrive at their home, driven by an African slave, they have already encountered Natty, whose vernacular immediately distinguishes him from the Judge, as when the former’s “ye” answers the latter’s “you” (19). Such distinctions in manner evince Cooper’s vigilance in pointing out the differing manners practiced by his characters. Chapter IV brings visitors to welcome the Temples: Major Hartmann, with his “strong German accent” (46) and the courtly Monsieur Le Quoi, addressed by Richard as “Gaul” (ibid.). Each of the domestics that welcome the Temples home has a different, minutely-narrated pedigree, as does the Doctor. Readers soon see the presence of adherents of various Christian sects (154) and free blacks (189) in the village. Tiny Templeton is a cosmopolitan place; diverse Americans are cobbling together a community.

The cultural collage is further complicated by the arrival of Indian John (81). Like Natty, although for different reasons, he lives without community ties. Natty is neither at home in the settlements nor able to live with the Indians; with his people dead or dispersed, Chingachgook can only stay with his remaining friend. Existing on the margins of social power, each man functions as a cultural broker. Natty follows Indian cultural codes when he argues against Judge Temple’s game laws (23), and Chingachgook European ones when he apologizes for even thinking the Judge may have wounded Oliver intentionally (86). Natty has been raised in both European and Amerindian

contexts, and imagines himself as composed of both cultures. He believes that his “white gifts” – which derive primarily from Christianity – distinguish him from the Amerindians, specifically the Delaware, even though this is the group with whom he identifies and emulates in most of his behaviors. At times, though, Natty is Indian; in fact, his appearance and behavior nearly always lead him to be so identified by whites he encounters. Chingachgook’s cultural brokerage is that of all Native Americans who survived in contact zones; via his exposure to Natty and the Moravians who raised him, he has adopted certain aspects of white culture, if only nominally. In The Pioneers, both men are placed apart, operating in a space of their own, without the contextualization that comes from community. Natty and Chingachgook live in seclusion on the mountain outside of Templeton. Natty’s protests at the expansion of American settlements and Chingachgook’s death, brought about at least in part by the suffering of his people that was the consequence of that expansion, seem to place them on the side of Amerindians. There are, however, no such people left – in the world of the novel – for Natty and Chingachgook to stand with: as is emphasized at the novel’s end, Natty is quite alone. He rejects the Effinghams’ invitation to live with them, for he is “form’d for the wilderness” (463) just as, earlier in his life (although, of course, later in Cooper’s) he had refused to marry a Huron and with her assume a place in tribal life (The Deerslayer, 954).

Natty’s careful brokerage of Indian and Euro-American cultures leads to his isolation. The many cultures existing in and around Templeton provide one insight into Cooper’s imagination of American-ness; the slipperiness of those categories, best displayed in the unclassifiable Leatherstocking, demonstrates another. The opacity of the cultural identities of culture brokers like Natty reinforces the idea that an individual’s culture is potentially a shifting category. When encountering Natty for the first time, Cooper’s characters are often unsure how to characterize him: is he Indian? Is he a gentleman? How should he be treated? Cooper liked to (re)introduce readers to Natty by calling attention to his unique and hard-to-classify racial and cultural affiliation. On his

first appearance in The Pathfinder, Mabel believes him to be “Indian;” Arrowhead, her Tuscarora guide, declares him a “pale-face;” Cap (somewhat inconclusively) decides he is “half-rigged” (18). In The Deerslayer, the narrator’s description of a young Natty as marked by “guileless truth” (498) with an attire fit for one “between the skirts of civilized society and the boundless forests” is complemented by his companion’s friendly request that he “prove that [he] has a Delaware stomach, as [he] says he [has] had a Delaware edication” (499). An aged Natty enters The Prairie at a distance, but Cooper hints that the character’s significance is not discernible from his appearance: “a human form appeared [...] The figure was colossal; the attitude musing and melancholy [...] it was impossible to distinguish its just proportions or true character” (893).

Natty’s cultural brokerage makes him difficult to classify. In positioning himself between two cultures – Delaware and white (perhaps Moravian) Christian – he has effectively marked out an original territory for his cultural identity. Without cues that point to familiar designations, newcomers can’t read his map. While it may be tempting for readers to label this new identity “American” and link it to the nation Natty saw into being, doing so could be an oversimplification both of the meaning of Natty’s brokerage in the United States context and of what the category of “culture” means in the *Leatherstocking Tales*. By no means is Natty Bumppo the only culture broker in the novels; there are characters in each book who must negotiate their own cultural identities in the absence of a stable and/or homogenous community. As I’ve mentioned, Chingachgook represents the many Amerindians forced to adapt themselves to aspects of Euro-American culture, often to their detriment. Cooper demonstrates a more nuanced understanding of the brokerage challenges faced by natives in portraying characters who move from one Amerindian culture to another such as Magua, a Canadian Iroquois operating, unhappily, among the Huron. Other characters who perform brokerages that cross cultural lines include Oliver Effingham, whose affiliation with Chingachgook leads the prim Temples to imagine him part Indian; or Jasper Western, whose knowledge of French and native languages causes him to be accused as a traitor.

There are times, too, when Cooper has his characters manipulate cultural identities purposefully; to fool an enemy, as in the many cases of disguise in The Last of the Mohicans, or to humiliate one, as in the spectacle of Dr. Battius, captured, shaved, and set upon an ass by the Sioux (Prairie 1224).

All of these cases demonstrate that in the world of the Leatherstocking Tales, culture is not a fixed quality, but one affected by the vicissitudes of situation, education, or inclination. While no individual may have an unlimited palette from which to draw in constructing his or her identity - as there are lines, as that of marriage between races or even between classes, which cannot be crossed - each does have the ability (should she choose to employ it) to “pick and choose” aspects from different cultures to adopt as their own. This potential for cultural dynamism is in part a product of the frontier setting. Contact zones produce culture brokers. The conception of this frontier as American might serve to appropriate cultural brokerage as an empowering cultural trait particularly available to citizens of the United States. The isolation from community that comes from leaving city centers and the social structures that mark them to settle the frontier brings opportunity and the need for some “wiggle room” in enacting cultural identity. The first arena where this comes into play is in basic survival—to survive in the backwoods, one is well-advised to observe practices of native inhabitants. The first step for the vulnerable settler would be to befriend rather than antagonize them. To do that might require learning their language, which, in turn, will allow the easier adoption of their practices. Once survival is ensured, one might find the time to study other aspects of the culture, begin to understand and even adopt them. In the world of the Leatherstocking novels, this is not “Indianization”—Cooper does not present settlers who become Indians, only those who become white men who can live among Indians. Cultural brokerage for these early Americans confers a benefit; entering Amerindian culture not only confers survival skills, but an enhanced world view and wisdom in approaching foreignness that is necessary to succeed in a multicultural world. As the historical record shows, cultural brokers proved indispensable as translators, guides, and negotiators in the settlement and expansion of the United

States. Cross-cultural experience confers advantages, and skills that those whose cultural lives have been fixed can not have. Outside of contact zones, one must travel to gain such experience. For Cooper -- whose tastes, ambitions, and family obligations precluded him from making extended trips west à la Catlin -- this meant going to Europe.

"Things less evident": Cross-Cultural Knowledge and the Problems of Travel Writing

James Fenimore Cooper was no Natty Bumppo; the Cooperstown of his day was no longer a frontier settlement, and he spent most of his early adulthood in New York City. He did, however, have firsthand experience of how travel to foreign lands produces the vulnerability and displacement that encourages cultural brokerage. When he came to Europe for the first time in his adult life (he had visited several European ports as a teenage sailor), he came as an American who had absorbed the ability for cultural dynamism from the historical and imagined contact zone of the frontier. He keenly felt the culture shock of being a foreigner, particularly in facing European ignorance of his homeland. As Catlin would, Cooper felt the European conflation of "American" with "Amerindian," and like Catlin, he found ways to use European ignorance to reinforce the superiority of his own experience.

In a letter to Peter Jay written in 1830, Cooper describes several encounters with this species of European befuddlement. In the first, his daughters' Dresden schoolmistress tells him that she had fielded requests from locals who wished to see the American children and "what shade of black" they were, but she would only respond that "they are the fairest children in my school" (2:12). A woman who requests an audience with the author himself "with some embarrassment acknowledged that had she not known I was an American she might have supposed I was an European." While he did take some opportunities to share his knowledge of Native American culture with certain interested Europeans, he was more struck by the need to establish what American meant when it didn't mean Indian. This letter simultaneously exposes foreign ignorance

of American-ness and Cooper's modeling of how that quality should be performed; the Coopers are model American cosmopolitans.

To highlight certain cross-cultural coups is not to say that the Coopers didn't expend a significant amount of energy in acquiring those abilities. Cooper went through the stages of adjustment that all travelers making a life in a foreign culture do, and, accordingly, experienced his share of the peevishness, insecurity, impatience, alienation, and even physical illness that can be the lot of the culture-shocked. Letters that describe symptoms like these likely led Wayne Franklin to write that "throughout his years abroad Cooper was to feel ill at ease in European society, out of the circle and out of sorts" (New World 25). Other letters, like the one above, as well as published works make clear, however, that these feelings, though they were without question an important aspect of his foreign experience, are not the whole story. An example is the buoyant letter written three years before his daughters were learning German in Dresden: "I trot around the environs and traverse the City of Paris, with just as much familiarity as I used to do the same thing in the good town of Gotham. I am really got frightfully domesticated – the language begins to sit easily on me, and I talk often by the hour – The children prattle like natives, and Mrs. Cooper makes out wonderfully well" (1:223 7/7/27 to Bradish).

Even if the Coopers, as James Franklin Beard reported, "refused all Sunday invitations, attended the great Protestant Episcopal Church (the Oratoire), and resisted all pressures which might compromise their identities as loyal Americans" (1:146), they managed to make themselves at home in French culture all the same. The writer enjoyed the city's easy cosmopolitanism:

So the world goes here—You often find yourself thrown by accident, in Paris, into a circle of some six or eight names you have often heard, but which attract no sort of observation here—It is only curious to a stranger. [...] you see people from all quarters of the world—I have been talking in a ring with a Russian Prince, an Austrian Count, a Dutch Admiral, an English Lord, an Egyptian Aga, and the Lord knows who else—With the Russians I am on very

good terms. (1:204 3/26/27 to Mrs. Jay)

In a scene reminiscent of Disney's "Small World" ride, Cooper, here, is the animatronic representative of the United States. He relished the stimulating, international atmosphere of Paris. Cooper didn't want to blend in with foreigners, but he did want their acceptance. Thence the feelings of insecurity Beard described; Cooper clearly valued cross-cultural exchange and wanted to model the productive interaction of an American with eminent foreigners, and the inevitable moments of misunderstanding, whether they arose from ignorance or simple homesickness, were discouraging. One result of these bouts of culture shock was the reinforcement of his nationalist project. Beard explains that "Cooper's feelings of marginality in Europe forced him to articulate his assumptions. And this act in turn gave to the further efforts of his imagination a new tone. Seeing himself as a decided American in the midst of Europe, Cooper took upon himself the costume of America's simplicity" (34). Cooper's time in Europe inspired him to link his personal, literary career with the development of United States culture, bringing the concern with American identity that links so many of his works to his awareness and making it more intentional. Cooper's brand of "American simplicity" meant living as the embodiment of American principles, and this did not preclude study and appreciation of the ways of other nations. Although in moments of discomfort the writer certainly felt himself "marginalized" and misunderstood in Europe, his record of active participation in and enjoyment of foreign scenes shows that he was also proud of his ability to "fit in." Cooper was on the margins in Europe as he consistently acted as the outsider he was—an American and a foreigner. He understood that that position was not without its powers, and he found ways to capitalize upon them.

Cooper's pioneering cosmopolitanism was aided by the right sort of personality; he had an adaptive ability to get along with others and move with confidence in diverse company. Surely these skills were honed when the very young Cooper first sailed across the Atlantic (even as a eleven-year-old, Cooper had perceived his own difference from the New England "Yankees" who

studied with him at Yale), and again, later, when the new author circulated in multicultural New York City. Beard quotes Dr. John Francis, a Bread and Cheese Club member, who says Cooper was marked by his “courteous behavior” and it was “gratifying” to

observe the dexterity with which Mr. Cooper would cope with some Eastern friend who contributed to our delight with a “Boston notion,” or with Trelawny, the associate of Byron, descanting on Greece and the “Younger Son,” or with any guests of the club, however dissimilar their habits or character; accommodating his conversation and manners with the most marvelous facility. (1:84)

These observations of an early friend show Cooper’s unusual capacity to adjust his behavior to changing situations, and to cope with individuals with different points of view. These aspects of Cooper’s personality have been overlooked, overshadowed by the fractious, irascible reputation created by political adversaries once Cooper was back in the United States, but Cooper’s European experience testifies to their accuracy; successful cross-cultural exchange requires the willingness to adapt one’s habits to make oneself appealing to strangers with strange ways. Cooper could not only mix well with different people, but he also enjoyed doing it. In the words of Kay Seymour House, “to be alive, for Cooper, was to be aware of and responsive to fine distinctions among men and scenes. Sometimes, reading his journals, one feels that Cooper had an exaggerated sensitivity to cultural differences” (10). This sensitivity led Cooper to populate his novels with a wide array of character “types,” and it led him to respond with curiosity and enthusiasm to the diverse foreigners he met in Europe. If he leaned towards “exaggerating” differences, then that was only the natural inclination of a traveler in foreign lands. It kept him interested, and helped him define his own identity against an array of diverse foreign templates. Useful as they were, Cooper did not rely on his natural tendencies alone to get him through his travels; before and during his time abroad, he worked to develop his cross-cultural skills. Aware that additional languages are additional tools with which to understand the world, Cooper and his daughters began taking French and Spanish

lessons from native speakers in New York City by 1824 (Franklin JFC 513), and continued their language learning formally and informally throughout their time abroad. Eventually, Cooper acquired fluency in French and proficiency in German and Italian.

The decade that saw the Cooper family begin their European stay and the publication of the first three novels in the Leatherstocking series was one in which American cultural identity was a particularly sensitive and controversial issue. To Franklin, Cooper's life "writes the cultural history of his post-colonial nation's precise situation" (xix). Much about the United States, from table etiquette to the conditions of the book trade, seemed up for grabs. Citizens of the young republic were growing more interested in defining American identity, realizing that such an identity was developing. The perceived lack of a deep history or a unifying culture seemed to imply a blankness that the actions of Americans, on the global stage and in their local taverns, were filling in, and sometimes strident voices called for this writing of American culture to be done with deliberate care. Not only could American culture be the face of the nation presented to foreigners, it could be the glue that held a diverse and dispersed population together.

Interest in U.S. culture gained momentum when Europeans began writing about it. Tourists from England found that a visit to America brought not only the discomforts of travel but culture shock: things worked differently in the United States. While at first, this might have seemed like a shock to visitors and hosts alike, people on either side of the Atlantic quickly realized they were foreigners to each other. The British, with their greater wealth, infrastructure, and potential to publish, wrote first, and often didn't hesitate to point out deficiencies or poke fun at the foreigners who had been colonists. The (poor) manners of the citizenry and lack of creature comforts were favorite subjects in accounts of American travel. Proud Americans cried foul. As soon as travelogues describing journeys of foreigners in the United States appeared, the "calumny" controversy was underway. In newspaper editorials and classroom writing exercises, Americans complained about the inaccuracy and unfairness of the travelers' accounts.

At least initially, Cooper was as incensed by the calumnies as anyone, but he felt the best way to correct inaccurate portrayals of the U.S. was to take the high ground, and to disprove by his own example aspersions cast against the national character. He had observed and thought carefully about the culture(s) of his fellow Americans—more so, most likely, than the majority of the protesters against the calumnies. More aware of the complexity and instability of cultural identity in his country, Cooper was more considered than most in his response to the travelers' opinions, even if his pride was just as wounded.

Cooper published two texts that directly and primarily addressed the cross-cultural aspects of the transatlantic travel writing controversy. The narrators he created in each did try to “take a more honorable part,” remaining cool and collected when confronted with unpleasant European opinions of their homeland. Both Notions of the Americans Picked Up By A Traveling Bachelor, published in 1828, and “Point de Bateaux à Vapeur—Une Vision” (hereafter referred to in translation, as “No Steamboats”) [3] which appeared four years later, were attempts to correct European misinformation and prejudice by offering new perspectives to an ongoing conversation. Cooper found himself acting as a representative for his nation, and sought ways to defend its reputation. As he did, he worked hard to maintain his dignity, as he was, like most of his countrymen, most sensitive to accusations that Americans were unrefined bumpkins. Nervous that the national reputation was based at least in part on the comportment of its citizens, the most strident of the offended editorials had called for the calumnies to be met with courtesy and calm. This was what Cooper sought to do.

It was not always easy; to respond to accounts of one's home country from the comfort and provincialism of one's own hearth is one thing, but to do so from a foreign country is another. Criticizing the actions of a traveler who fails to “do as the Romans do” might be defensible and Cooper was wary of being seen as a calumniator himself. Significantly, the American voices in both texts express their views passively—that is, only when asked; they do not seek to broadcast

their opinions uninvited [4]. This restraint illustrates Cooper's hope that Americans could be better travelers than their European counterparts had been.

Cooper's growing experience as a novelist helps explain his decision to present his argument for the United States in the form of a *fictional* travel account; the fact that he had never seen some of the regions described helps explain it, too. The convoluted narrative form of Notions, which is a travelogue of an imagined journey of an imagined traveler to the author's actual home, is disorienting, and suggests that other factors were at work as well. Neither a political economist nor a politician, Cooper likely felt that a literary contribution would be more likely to be taken seriously. He was experiencing the process through which stranger sees a place differently than its natives. Couching his "notions" – which are actually of Europeans as well as Americans – in fictional terms may have seemed a safer strategy to Cooper, who was familiar with the vitriolic reactions the calumnies had generated. The realm of art may have seemed a safer venue for the exploration of cross-cultural understanding. The need for diplomacy in such writing was clear.

Living abroad, Cooper felt the impact of the calumnies. He wasn't just reading travel books—he was deflecting the perceptions and misinformation of Europeans he met. He was upset by those who had from small experience made proclamations about life in the U.S., and even seemingly trivial misunderstandings chafed. Writing to Benjamin Silliman in 1827, with Notions in progress, Cooper expressed his pique at being informed by a returned Frenchman that U.S. was a primitive place, bereft of carpets and peaches. Though frustrated, Cooper tried to be philosophical and proactive. "So difficult it is for Countries to know each other! How much light your correspondent can throw on the subject remains to be seen" (1:216 5/12/27). The comment encapsulates Cooper's cross-cultural mission and the motivation behind it. Cooper's plan in writing Notions of the Americans and "Point de Bateaux" was twofold: to correct what he saw as wrong information in foreign travelers' accounts of the United States, and to portray the need for care when engaging with foreign cultures—to understand life in a new land is "difficult" and takes

work. Travel writers, he claims, should take care to understand and contextualize what they have seen, and, admitting their own ignorance, tread carefully in making judgments about foreign cultures.

Notions is narrated primarily by a European philosopher-*bon vivant*—the “traveling bachelor” mentioned in the title. As the book goes on, his erroneous and/or absent ideas about the U.S. are replaced by those gathered while traveling there with a local he had met “between Moscow and Warsaw” (13). The book is dedicated to this young man, John Cadwallader, who shares more than his initials with Cooper, and is presented throughout the book as a quintessential gentleman relentlessly devoted both to his nation and to a common sense approach to intercultural understanding. The Bachelor is a member of a Club composed of self-identified cosmopolites who devote their lives to travel, study and pleasure [6]. The fact that he earnestly wishes Cadwallader to accept a place in the Club indicates the American’s success in attaining the highest level of cosmopolitan sophistication, while Cadwallader’s unshakable desire instead to return to his home country and settle suggests a rejection that, to the Bachelor, seems nearly as inexplicable and powerful as had been the rebellion of the Colonies decades earlier. Cadwallader inspires the Bachelor with the idea that there may be something in the United States worthy of the Club’s attention, so he decides to accompany the American home, and tour and report on the U.S. under his supervision.

The “calumnies” come up very early in the book, in a delightful scene that occurs during the passage to New York. The Bachelor proudly shows Cadwallader the “little library of travels, pamphlets, and political dissertations” (15) on America he has acquired, expressing his anxiety “to impress [his] companion with a favorable opinion of [his] earnestness in...research.” He is eager not only to impress Cadwallader with his efforts at resource-gathering but also to acknowledge and rectify the deficiency his ignorance of the U.S. creates in his otherwise unimpeachable credentials. To his disappointment, after viewing the collection, Cadwallader offers only a “singular air of

indifference” and “cold eye” (15). But Cadwallader’s coolness does not go deep. Back in his cabin, he writes a carefully-argued and fervently patriotic response to the collection – which includes many of the most notorious “calumnies.” The Bachelor attaches Cadwallader’s lengthy exposition as a note following the letters of his own composition that comprise the book.

Throughout the Bachelor’s letters, Cadwallader is an often-quoted mouthpiece for the American point of view, but this attached note is the only instance where the book directly addresses the calumnies. In it, Cadwallader explains that the tensions surrounding these traveler’s books in the U.S. and England are rooted in Americans’ feelings of betrayal from a nation they looked upon as a parent. While he admits that there is truth in some of the accusations made against his country, he insists that for uninitiated strangers to point out such imperfections and be surprised when they offend is unrealistic. More upsetting and less forgivable are erroneous observations published as facts, and corrections of these prompt most of Cadwallader’s speeches throughout the book, just as they had ostensibly prompted Cooper’s writing it. Cadwallader explains in the note that he writes it because he cannot allow untruths to stand unchallenged. He claims that he holds no grudge against the British authors of the calumnies. Even though “so many English have been journeying in America to ridicule, to caricature, and to misrepresent,” he explains that, with the rest of the American public, he laughs at these foreigners’ “paper bullets” (562). Even so, he wishes the writers would stop, as he senses an ill-will in the calumnies – which he calls “this war of innuendos” (557) -- that could escalate from literary to political realms and end in real conflict. Cadwallader claims that he is above the pettiness of cross-cultural name-calling and that “at present the feeling in America in respect to England is rather that of indifference” (554), but his note has a threatening tenor common to American responses to perceived calumnies. The United States, he explains, is not afraid of English disapproval, for it knows the Empire is now rendered powerless to act against its former colonies: “England has already done and said her worst” (555) reminds Cadwallader, and besides, “Willful ignorance is sure to entail its punishment” (551). Even when

made in a calm and gentlemanly manner, such ominous observations undermine Cadwallader's air of indifference.

Cadwallader hints that the Bachelor must feel embarrassed at the actions of the British travel writers. Because he claims no American traveler has "retaliated" by writing against England – even though that would be an "easy task" (562) – the United States clearly occupies the moral high ground. The behavior of the English travelers is beneath their dignity. Cadwallader/Cooper clearly tries to maintain that position of moral superiority throughout Notions, aware that "retaliating" for the travelers' calumnies could undermine his authority. By giving the book a traveling European narrator, Cooper created a model of how such travelers should write of their journeys; he wrote the travel writing he thought he would like to see written about the United States. And by framing the book as he did, Cooper had a European voice both retract the calumnies and "retaliate" by painting an unflattering picture of European life. Via his depiction of the Bachelor and of Cadwallader's continuous transatlantic comparisons, he presented a very critical picture of European society, criticizing Europeans as artificial in manner (150), overly-regimented in behavior (305), and intolerant of diversity (298).

While Cooper's was an interesting scheme to try to get involved in the travel-writing controversy and yet keep away from its baseness, its effectiveness was questionable. Even American readers found Cadwallader's praise of his homeland overblown, his condescending and fact-laden lectures insufferable, and the Bachelor's tolerance and unquestioning admiration of his American friend difficult to believe (Williams xxxiv). Cooper's desire may have been to maintain the higher ground and establish authorial credibility by "sticking to the facts" and keeping the transatlantic discussion on an objective, mutually educational level, but his emotional connection to his subject remains transparent. He acknowledged this in his personal correspondence, wherein he admitted that while writing he was "tempted to decorate rather than to describe" (qtd Williams xxi).

Cooper's decision to express these opinions by obscuring them, as it were, in an American

travelogue, demonstrates his firm grasp on the problems inherent in understanding, and so in depicting, a foreign society. The newness of the United States meant that accessing *its* culture was especially difficult; audiences don't have a store of knowledge or the tools with which to interpret new information. On the one hand, the Bachelor affirms that "all the books in the world cannot qualify a man to estimate the power of his species, half so well as personal observation" (245), but on the other, "there is perhaps no Christian country on earth, in which a foreigner is so liable to fall into errors, as in the United States" which is

in some measure new and peculiar. The European, under such circumstances, has a great deal to *unlearn*, before he can begin to learn correctly. [...] It is a bad compliment to human nature, but not the less true, to say that no young traveler enters a foreign Country without early commencing the task of invidious comparison. This is natural enough, certainly, for we instantly miss the things to which we have been accustomed, and which may owe half their value to use, and it requires time and habit to create new attachments.

(6)

Cooper's understanding of the culture shock that can cloud all travelers' reactions to foreignness is clear here, as is his sense of the effort that adjustment to new cultures requires. He condemns travelers for making uninformed judgments, but sympathizes with their inability to do otherwise without substantial investment of time and energy. But in addition to the challenges all travelers face, Europeans, Cooper explains, must make an extra effort when approaching the United States. If one takes the Bachelor's "Europeans" to be his fellow Club members (to whom he addresses his letters), one can conclude that American culture is not only new but also is separated by a greater degree of difference from Europe than European cultures are from one another.

Cooper wanted Notions of the Americans to be descriptive and informative—a text that would bring Anglo-American discourse to a more productive plane. His strategy of doing this by "setting the record straight" arose from his appreciation of the difficulty of describing not only a

foreign culture, but one's own. Having had an introduction to living abroad, dealing with foreign responses to his presence as well as his own responses to the new environment, Cooper sought refuge in the less-tangled realm of factual information, avoiding less definable aspects of culture. The disclaimers on the failures of travel writing to convey knowledge of countries traveled to that are sprinkled liberally throughout the book testify to Cooper's understanding of the problems inherent in the transmission of cross-cultural insights, and thus his patience with misinformed Europeans like the imagined Bachelor. Cooper realized that the controversy generated by the calumnies did not result from aspects of either the culture written about or the culture written from. Rather the problems – the conflict – arose from a lack of sensitivity on the parts of all involved, or a lack of awareness of the fact that in traveling in a different place one is also traveling in a different culture. Understanding that means adjustments must be made, or, at the very least, ignorance must be admitted, by the traveler. Only when that is done can cosmopolitan insight be gained.

To do a foreign culture justice in a book of travel writing is a difficult task; in my scan of articles in the American and British presses that addressed the travel writing controversy, I did not find a single case of a book of travel with a foreign author that received unqualified endorsement in a review. In fact, even books by Americans on America (like Cooper's) did not command much encomium. Like Cooper, though, some commentators, like the columnist quoted below, realized that to write a "really useful and instructive" travel book was an almost prohibitively perilous undertaking.

The requisite qualifications are, natural endowments, much previous instruction, capability of keen perception and enjoyment of the beautiful and sublime in natural scenery, a generous and philosophic mind to observe men, manners, institutions, laws, literature, the arts and monuments of the country surveyed, and a sincere desire to separate the true from the seeming, and more than all, an indulgent and impartial spirit, and a disposition to find

enjoyment, wherever propriety and innocence allow. [...] But the union of the whole, is a very rare assemblage, though indispensable to qualify the traveler to be useful and instructive, in composing a book of travels. (“English Caricatures”)

This is setting the bar high, but Cooper had many of the qualifications called for. In writing Notions of the Americans, however, his intent was not to write a book of travel. Adopting the form to his own purposes was an interesting, well-intentioned attempt to solve the problem of getting “Countries to know one another.”

By the time the satirical “No Steamboats,” was published in 1832, Cooper had had several more years in Europe. He had also come to understand some of the calumny-writers’ complaints about his fellow citizens as well as the pitfalls and nuances of looking from the outside in on a foreign culture. But despite the fact that his Cooperstown neighbors would later accuse him of holding unpatriotic affinities, he had not turned European or “gone native”—he was a cosmopolitan expatriate looking forward to his eventual return home. The publication of “No Steamboats” in French in a Parisian magazine is a marker of his deepened cross-cultural engagement. Before leaving for Europe, Cooper had written a letter informing a Swiss friend and potential translator of his forming plans. Although he playfully translates his address (Hell-gate becomes “la porte d’infers), he writes the letter in English, but switching in the letter’s final paragraph to French, excuses himself for doing so. This diplomatic gesture shows his respect for the first language of his correspondent, and his appreciation of and deference to his friend’s superior cross-cultural knowledge. The postscript is a charming admission of his reticence in communicating in a foreign language: “Adieu mon ami—je vous ai écrit en anglais, parce que je trouve, que vous êtes le meilleur ecolier--Mes enfants commencent à parler francais, probablement bien—mais, moi, je suis où vous m’avez laiss[é?] <ez?>” (“Goodbye my friend – I’ve written in English, as I find that you are the better student – My children are beginning to speak French, well enough – but me, I’m where you left me.”) (1:126 9/23/25 to F.A. de Syon. Punctuation in original.) Cooper’s addition of

this note exemplifies the humility and willingness to learn with which he approached foreign cultures.

A few years in Paris did wonders for Cooper's language skills. Not only did he, as quoted above, "talk by the hour" in French, he wrote it as well. French was a "lingua franca" of Europe, and Cooper was not excluded from the society of diverse Europeans who used it. His publication of an article in a Parisian magazine dedicated to the promotion of French writers was a coup; Paris's literati were willing to attend to his ideas. In its inaugural volume (1831), the editor of Paris, ou, le Livre des Cent-et-Un, introduced the journal's aim. Entitled "Au Public," this introduction avers that the mission of his publication is

trés-simple. Il faut passer en revue le Paris moderne; il faut le montrer tel qu'il est, incertain, fantasque, colère, impatient, pauvre, ennuyé, encore avide d'art et d'émotions, mais difficile à émouvoir, absurde souvent, quelquefois sublime, il faut faire pour le Paris d'aujourd'hui ce que Mercier a fait pour le Paris de son temps, avec cette différence que cette fois les tableaux de mœurs seront rarement écrit sur la borne. (vi) [...]

Paris tremble, Paris menace, Paris crie aux armes, Paris veut aller à la frontière, Paris veut rester en repos, Paris éclat de rire, Paris pleure et sanglote,...quel écrivain voudrait ce charger de ce monstre!

Eh bien! donc, renoncez à l'unité pour un peinture multiple, appelez à votre secours les imaginations contemporaines avec leurs coloris si divers... (vii)

very simple. It must review modern Paris, it must show it just how it is, uncertain, whimsical, bad-tempered, impatient, wretched, bored, still hungry for art and emotion, but difficult to move, often absurd, sometimes sublime; it must do for the Paris of today what Mercier [5] did for the Paris of his times, with the difference that this time the customs presented will rarely be written in stone.

Paris trembles, Paris terrifies, Paris calls to arms, Paris wants to rush to the border,
Paris wants to be still, Paris bursts into laughter, Paris cries and sobs...what writer would
want to take charge of such a monster!

Well then, renounce unity for a multifaceted painting, call to your aid the imaginations
of today, with their many shades...

The “simple” mission of Le Livre... is to capture the complexity of 1830s Paris. The atmosphere
was dynamic and difficult, and Cooper’s exposure to it strongly contributed to his cosmopolitan
development, and predisposed him for the surprised disenchantment he would feel on returning
home to climes less “multiple.” The Parisian literati welcomed new ideas, and Cooper found in Le
Livre... the ideal vehicle for his comic presentation of the French establishment.

Cooper was clearly proud of his abilities and enjoyed the opportunity to tease French
reactionaries. He commented on the project as it was in progress in a letter to John Allen Collier.

I very well know what fun is. I have just been giving a little myself to the French, and I
take advantage of your franking privilege to send you a copy. The history of my morceau is
this – The Doctrinaires – who are gentry that believe in the possibility of having Monarchy
Aristocracy and Democracy all at once, -- in their jealousy of us, have let loose the curs of
abuse upon us for the last twelvemonth. I have personified their theory under the name of
the Three Ideas, and have made them the organs of proclaiming their own nonsense as
respects us, by giving their facts and arguments a little coloured, and by George, not much
coloured either. You probably do not understand French well enough to feel my drift, and it
is absolutely necessary to read the article in the original, to be familiar with all that has
passed, and to be au fait of French character, in order to feel all that I would express.

(2:366 12/14/1832)

The “Doctrinaires” Cooper refers to here are the same opponents of European liberalism

who had persecuted Lafayette for his promotion of American ideals a few years earlier. As a supporter of European revolutionary movements, Cooper was aligned with these liberals, and found himself, as a representative of the United States, the target of establishment propaganda. To Cooper, this was a new iteration of the calumnies; prejudiced interests conveyed flawed information to promote their own interests and work against those of America. Cooper had written Notions of the Americans with Lafayette's encouragement, hoping the book would answer monarchists' negative statements about the efficiency of the U.S. government. As the waves of revolution that swept Europe in the nineteenth century grew stronger, many Americans felt a patriotic affinity to such movements, excited that the success of their democracy could set off a domino effect that would topple European monarchies and affirm the rightness of the American way. Cooper's statement in the opening prelude of "No Steamboats" that "the last, the most sublime of all of the acts of the Drama, is yet to come" (71) is a reference to this sense of the global destiny of the U.S..

His insistence that the piece must be read in the original French to be properly appreciated stems from his belief that the use of French is a sign of his effective immersion in French culture, and a mark of his credibility as a commentator on France. The editor recognizes the achievement in his Introduction to Cooper's article. He first emphasizes that the piece was not translated from English, but written in French – an emphasis that points to Cooper's immersion in the Parisian literary scene. All the same Cooper's French is a foreigner's; he must have been a bit subdued by the editor's comment that Cooper's nationality leads to certain linguistic idiosyncrasies: "certains locutions peu idiomatiques." The rest of his comments, though, agree with Cooper's to Collier, and so affirm that Cooper made his point:

Cette vision, empreinte d'un bout à l'autre de sarcasme et d'ironie, a pour objet, ce nous semble, de réfuter les attaques multipliées auxquelles le gouvernement des États-Unis d'Amérique a été en butte, dans ces derniers temps, de la part de différents

publicistes français et étrangers. Les personnages allégoriques désignés sous le nom collectif de MM. de Trois-Idées, représentent les partisans et les champions des formes constitutionnelles adoptées en Europe, et la plupart des arguments burlesques que l'auteur met dans la bouche de ces messieurs ne sont que la critique de certaines objections soulevées contre le système américain, lequel est, suivant M. Cooper, le seul système vraiment représentatif, dans l'acceptation complète et littérale du mot. (222)

This vision, printed from one end to the other with sarcasm and irony, has for a goal, it seems to us, the refutation of the multiplying attacks of which the government of the United States has been the target in publications both French and foreign. The allegorical characters designated under the name of Mistery Three Ideas, represent the partisans and champions of the constitutional forms adopted in Europe, and most of the burlesque arguments which the author puts in the mouths of these gentlemen are merely criticisms of certain objections against the American system, which, according to Mr. Cooper, is the only truly representative system, in the accepted full and literal sense of the word.

The story is “a vision.” It begins with a sweeping, metaphysical relation of the history of western civilization which builds to a crescendo with the formation of the United States, and then abruptly shifts to a first-person account of the author in his study; at the end, Cooper wakes as from a dream. After the opening prelude, readers get a glimpse of Cooper’s assimilation into French habits: the “truly Parisian” chimney, the Louis XV furnishings, the violinist friend, and the Swiss butler (72). In an exchange that displays the easy rapport between Cooper and this foreign servant, visitors are announced: “Their footman calls them abstractions” warns the butler. Enter three highly-caricatured, abstracted and imaginary European strangers, who wish to present Cooper with their “dreadful picture” of his “unhappy country” (73). Regardless of this stated purpose of their

call, the visitors are ostentatiously polite and point out their cosmopolitan sophistication, affirming that they “are not persons who allow [them]selves to feel incommoded in any situation whatever” (73). Cooper, too, seems eager to demonstrate that he is not one to lose his composure; when the visitors assert that their information is unquestionable because it came from the “last steamboat which arrived at Havre” (73), he is relieved. He can dismiss their arguments because he knows that could not be true, as to that time, ships crossing the Atlantic went under sail. The superiority of Cooper’s information gives him a stronger position from which to receive the visitors’ criticism of his country. But his visitors accuse him of fixating too much on that mistake; they have come to urge him to correct or at least answer for what they perceive as the failings of his native country, and they insist that he should not quibble.

Cooper coolly responds that “the evident falsehood” of his visitors’ “fact” about transatlantic communication (corrected in the title) convinces him that they “may be mistaken with regard to things less evident” (75). If these Europeans can’t get the simplest of facts straight, then they will be lost to nuances of cultural difference, which are less easy to discern – less evident – than simple maritime comings and goings. Information from travelers who are similarly careless about their cross-cultural observations should not be trusted. Cooper’s phrasing here – “things less evident” (“choses moins apparentes”) – is important. The Europeans are attempting to argue the flaws of a culture that is foreign to them without understanding the difficulty inherent in the process of accessing such a culture; Cooper is telling the visitors that they have more cross-cultural work to do.

In the face of the ignorance of these foreigners, Cooper maintains a cool, knowing stance similar to the one Cadwallader sought to maintain. This is best exemplified at the story’s climax, when, after aptly parrying his visitors’ rapid-fire accusations, he “remained with folded arms, like a deputy under a volley of hisses” (78). Cooper triumphs by calm adhesion to common sense. Unlike in Notions, which, though fictional, was meant to convey realistic scenarios, the Europeans here

are only “ideas,” and appear in fantasy. That shift means that Cooper’s message – though not significantly altered – comes across in a more diplomatic, more cosmopolitan manner. The imagination and silliness in “No Steamboats” testifies to the value of play and humor in cross-cultural learning; satire offers a layer of insulation that prevents Cooper’s ideas from reading as direct insult—or calumny. Abandonment of the “chronicle” form enables Cooper to process his own impressions of the European ideas he’s encountered in a more personal, less assailable, and potentially more understandable vein. Cooper discusses much more than transportation with the visiting Messieurs, but in sum, his statement about “things less evident” is a reference to cultural difference, and his imagined interaction with the Europeans in “No Steamboats” points to his belief in the potential inaccessibility of cross-cultural knowledge, and so, the need for care when writing about foreign subjects. Without such care, one may not only depict foreignness poorly, but also, in so doing, render oneself ridiculous, as do Cooper’s unusual visitors.

The importance of facts and misinformation in cross-cultural relations is a significant theme in Cooper’s “Vision,” as is the difficulty of European acquisition of reliable information on the United States. “No Steamboats” not only points out the the visitors' ignorance, but points to the very real difficulties of transatlantic communication. The “vision” thus reads as an interesting coda to Notions, both of which are studies of the United States’ image abroad. Whereas, in the earlier text, Cooper eschewed the attempt to discuss “things less evident” in American culture in favor of a factual description, in the second, he acknowledges that cultural differences, though difficult to understand and to articulate, can’t be ignored. In “No Steamboats,” Cadwallader’s faith in a “common sense” approach to intercultural exchange is revised; the more slippery, “less evident” aspects of culture are as important as facts even if they may not be as easily demonstrated. Just as a figure like Natty Bumppo can’t be read at first glance, as he operates outside a stable cultural context, foreign cultures take time and effort to understand. A casual encounter is unlikely to result in a grasp of the “things less evident” that compose culture.

Neither Notions of the Americans nor “No Steamboats” is exactly “travel writing” – they are not nonfiction travel accounts – yet they belong to that inclusive genre all the same. Cooper did not want to ape the earlier travel writers who wrote on America, but rather to address the role of cultural difference in foreign travel, and so in learning about foreign cultures via travel literature. These texts’ complication of the genre of travel writing mean that while they may not answer the questions about cultural difference raised by the calumnies, they seek to understand how such difference can be explored. Cooper’s strategy in writing travel enabled him to look for fresh insights on the meanings and mechanics of intercultural exchange. The first and foremost of these was the lack of information on both sides of the Atlantic about the world across it, and an accompanying lack of means to reliably acquire such information. The best way to solve that problem was to learn experientially.

Active Inquiry: American Culture and the “Home” Novels

Living abroad, Cooper was practicing the best means of acquiring such information. His extended stay in Europe gave him a better chance at cross-cultural understanding. The acquisition of language skills, the experience of foreign manners, and the cultivation of foreign friendships gave him practice in culture brokerage and a cosmopolitan insight to add to transatlantic conversations. The Coopers circulated with fellow American expatriates in Europe, and in successive years, more and more Americans would travel there; a stay in Europe became de rigueur for those who could afford it (or, curiously enough, for those who, like the Coopers, had trouble underwriting their lifestyles in increasingly expensive U.S. cities). Observing this, Cooper chafed at the way many of his compatriots seemed to process their foreign experience. Like the infamous early British travelers, these American tourists failed to understand the foreign cultures they visited,

but unlike them, this was not because of their prejudices against those cultures or propensity to denigrate the unfamiliar. These travelers went to Europe simply to gain the status of having done so at home, impressing domestic-bound countrymen with their veneer of foreign sophistication. They didn't question the accuracy of that foreignness, or the depth of the knowledge they gleaned from their travel.

Two of Cooper's novels deal explicitly with this issue. Questions of how to be a tourist, or how best to process one's experiences abroad, form key themes of Homeward Bound, or, The Chase and its sequel Home as Found (1838). These "Home" novels address the ways in which American culture should interact with foreign ones, and the way Americans should make use of that interaction. Published five years after Cooper returned from Europe, the novels characterize different types of Americans in Europe, and portray society in the United States in a critical light by employing the "outsider" vantage point of a group of returning travelers, who maintain their belief in American potential while worrying that the cultural direction the nation is taking threatens not to live up to American principles. Home as Found, in particular, serves as sequel and revision to Notions of the Americans; while both books use the device of well-traveled Americans returning home to guide foreign friends through the U.S., the later book is slightly more forgiving of the calumnies because it is slightly less forgiving of the aspects of American life they criticized. Both books seem to have been meant for the audience among which Cooper was living while he wrote. Notions of the Americans, intended to inform a foreign audience, misses most of the unfavorably characterized aspects of habits in the United States delineated in the novel, which, as a result, seems written for American consumption. Cooper saw himself as an advocate for American culture, and any activism implied in his writing was to help its cause. He promoted the best part of American life on one side of the Atlantic, downplaying its more negative aspects, but called attention to what he saw as cultural flaws domestically, where they could, he hoped, be rectified.

Compared to the Leatherstocking series, the "Home" novels have been addressed but

minimally by scholars. The Cooper Editions of both, though in progress, have yet to appear. Often, the novels are mentioned in reference to the unfavorable reviews they received and Cooper's response to them; a line or two explains that Cooper used the novels to point out what he found wrong in his homeland upon his return from Europe. In 1936, Robert E. Spiller judged the first novel "a relatively good adventure story" and Home as Found as Cooper's depiction of "the degeneracy of the republican ideal in America" (346). Kay Seymour House described the novels' presentation of "a model gentry" which Cooper's audience was not yet ready to digest (177). Opening a more in-depth discussion of the books, John McWilliams has linked Cooper's motivation in writing Home as Found to his "recent, shocked, half-willing assent" to aspects of Frances Trollope's presentation of the U.S. (1). Notwithstanding the insights offered by these and other critics, the most sustained attention given to the novels is likely still that given over several days in 1841 in a Cooperstown courtroom, when a judge ordered that they be read aloud in their entirety to a jury (Outland 93).

Just as John Cadwallader seemed a thinly-veiled version of Cooper himself, the Effinghams, the central characters in the "Home" Novels, and descendants of the Templetons of The Prairie, are legitimately read as fictional counterparts of the Coopers. While the returning Cooper family was not stranded off the coast of Africa and besieged by Arabs as the Effinghams (rather fantastically) are in Homeward Bound, many of the impressions and some of the events that comprise the second book, such as the dispute over lakefront property appropriated for public use, are reflections of the real-life experiences of the Coopers.

The first of the Home novels deals exclusively with the transatlantic passage of the New York packet *Montauk*. Cooper was a pioneer in the use of the ship as a novelistic world: here, the microcosm of the ship proves a fitting stage for cross-cultural encounters. Even if we put aside the adventure plot with its encounter with caricatured and barbarous "Arabs," the ship carries a diverse but carefully composed list of passengers. While the ship is multicultural, it is no *Pequod*—the

cultures represented are those whose interactions Cooper seeks to explore (and those most likely to be found on a London-New York packet in the 1830s). Among passengers are Europeans (or, more specifically, English, although the presence of the French governess does something to grant them a Continental stamp of approval) and Americans, and both are divided into subgroups. These more minute distinctions are related to class, a categorization most easily visible on the European side, where the only truly favored character is Sir George Templemore (a.k.a. Mr. Sharp). Among Americans, such distinctions aren't as easily made, nor are they approved—at least, not officially; individuals are judged and classified according to their behavior. In a round of rather aggressive introductions in the very first hours of the voyage the American Captain Truck assiduously makes the passengers acquainted with one another. The narrator discloses that “the Americans of the less trained class were already using [their fellow passengers] as freely as if they were old acquaintances,” (44) and continues with the following commentary on the cultural composition of the passengers of *Montauk*:

the cabins of these ships usually contain a congress of nations, though the people of England, and her ci-devant colonies, of course predominate those of the London lines. On the present occasion, the last two were nearly balanced in numbers, so far as national character could be made out; opinion (which, as might be expected, had been busy the while) being suspended in reference to Mr. Blunt [...]

This equal distribution of forces might, under other circumstances, have led to a division in feeling; for the conflicts between American and British opinions, coupled with a difference in habits, are a prolific source of discontent in the cabins of packets. The American is apt to fancy himself at home, under the flag of his country; while his transatlantic kinsman is strongly addicted to fancying that when he has fairly paid his money, he has a right to embark all his prejudices with his other luggage. (44)

There are several points in this setting of the novel's cross-cultural stage worthy of notice. The first

is the aforementioned linkage of national culture and behavior: Americans are more or less “trained,” and Americans and British differ in “habits.” Though the cultural differences that can professedly be such bones of contention are unspecified, culture is a learned rather than innate attribute.

The American passengers on the *Montauk* embody contested versions of American identity, particularly in the face of Europeans and their “prejudice”-laden luggage. How is American culture to be lived by its citizens? The extra-national setting of Homeward Bound highlights the instability of American-ness, which faces challenges from more than just English customers’ “prejudices.” The cast of characters contains several versions of the American, all of which have had, through travel abroad, the opportunity to escape the limitations of provincialism. This is an American ship, and it is proper American behavior that is to be sorted out.

Readers grasp rather early on that the Effinghams are to be the sorters as well as the preferred model of American-ness. Edward Effingham, with his “thoughtfulness of experience,” and “tastes improved by observation,” (10) is introduced first, expressing his love of England as he looks upon its coast from the deck. Three important characteristics are featured: Edward reflects upon what he does, allows himself to grow, and is fond of England. While the first two attributes are required for a cosmopolitan understanding of the world, the third indicates the Effinghams’ position above the prejudice and petty slander that characterized transatlantic travel in others. Young Eve Effingham appears next, a woman who like her father is “beyond the reach of national foibles” (10). In this description of his daughter Mr. Effingham emphasizes that for an individual to withhold admiration for foreign countries out of a sense of patriotism would be to display a weakness in his or her character. Eve then asserts her cosmopolitan nature: “I have been educated, as it is termed, in so many different places and countries [...] that I sometimes fancy I was born a woman, like my great predecessor and namesake, the mother of Abel. If a congress of nations, in the way of masters, can make one independent of prejudice, I may claim to possess the advantage”

(11). In this anticipation of R.W.B. Lewis, Cooper presents a bold model of an all-encompassing American-ness. This American Eve is hardly a blank slate; rather, as we learn from the details of her education that follow, she has gleaned from each European culture the best it has to offer, merging them into her own identity.

In this Eve Effingham philosophy of American cultural identity, Cooper prefigures the culture-chameleon career of George Catlin. One imagines her being comfortable in whatever company she chooses. Eve's casual remarks about her own identity are in actuality complex and daring: complex, because she is simultaneously unwritten and blessed as the Genesis precursor she claims to embody and as experienced and multidimensional as a "congress of nations;" daring, because this is a powerful and perilous paradox to live out—the "mother of Abel" had her failings. If American culture is free of restraining influences of history it can adapt itself to be as advantageous as possible. Born anew in each individual who realizes and cultivates it, its only definable traits seem to be mastery and the self-assurance and cultural awareness needed to read others. Eve's advantage comes from her absorption of so many cultures, which has given her the tools she needs to see the world entire.

By contrasting the cosmopolitan, highly-mannered and patriotic Effinghams with their countrymen, Cooper painted a clear picture of his view of how American travelers should behave. To those who did not act as they should, he was more ruthless than the calumny-writers had been. Cooper's depiction of these is likely the earliest fictional incarnation of the "ugly American" now stereotyped as the loud tourist, clad in T-shirt and armed with camera and credit card, demanding, in English, ketchup for his frites and ice for his Coke. The type is ably represented in Homeward Bound by Steadfast Dodge, and he is identified for what he is upon his arrival on the *Montauk*. Ensnared early in their cabins, the Effinghams emerge to oversee the embarkation of their fellow passengers. The Effinghams seek a hint of what company they can expect for the duration. Soon enough, they recognize a fellow American, but they are less than pleased; he is immediately

recognizable as the wrong kind. Eve's cousin John Effingham (who is, due to his more recent visits to the U.S., the Effingham most aware of conditions there) pronounces him "an American in a European mask" (20). Eve Effingham finds his appearance hilarious, and has the following exchange with her companions:

"Were I to hazard a conjecture, it would be to describe the gentleman as a collector of costumes, who had taken a fancy to exhibit an assortment of his riches on his own person. Mademoiselle Viefville, you, who so well understand costumes, may tell us from what countries the separate parts of that attire have been collected?"

"I can answer for the shop in Berlin where the traveling cap was purchased," returned the amused governess; "in no other part of the world can a parallel be found."

"I should think, ma'am," put in Nanny, with the quiet simplicity of her nature as well as of her habits, "that the gentleman must have bought his boots in Paris [...]" (20)

Continuing their game, the three woman quickly identify the provenances of the stranger's watchguard, coat, pipe, conchiglia and chain, and even mustache, concluding that "the *tout ensemble* [is] the world: the man is traveled, at least." Not only Eve but her two servants are amused with Dodge's display, which is quickly confirmed as pretension. The Effinghams learn that after only a summer's tour in Europe, he was "eloquence itself on the subject of self-satisfaction and self-knowledge" (20). Without exchanging a word with Dodge, the Effinghams can pronounce him unworthy. John implies he is a "vulgar fool stirring with full pockets" and a "yearling traveler" and labels him a "semi-annual savant" (22).

The Effinghams' negative first impression of Dodge does not arise from the brevity of his travels, but from their perception that he has traveled incorrectly. Just as he is blissfully unaware of the Effinghams' merciless teasing, he doesn't have an inkling that in his tear through the European capitals he may have acquired less than a complete understanding of the foreign cultures he passed through. They seem to recognize his type: he is a traveling with a mission (and probably with

limited time and financial resources). As if checking off a to-do list, he has purchased items he has heard of at shops he has heard of (most likely from other tourists) like souvenir talismans, not because he values them for their quality or cultural meaning, but because he wants his travel to be visible to others. Dodge hopes to return home and impress his stay-at-home friends and neighbors with his acquisitions. After all, they won't understand (or care) that those acquisitions are only material and as such of little value—he doesn't himself.

Dodge continues to negatively impress the Effinghams. His unintentionally hilarious relations of his cross-cultural experiences become comedic interludes in the novel. On two occasions, Dodge offers to help pass the time by sharing his travel journal. Out of a mix of politeness and a mischievous desire for entertainment, he is encouraged. Dodge, who puts out a small-town newspaper called the "Active Inquirer," is also in the process of his preparing his journal for publication. Throughout the voyage, he has consistently displayed his self-satisfaction; in particular, he is pleased with what he sees as his cosmopolitan abilities. He prides himself particularly on his relationship with the British passengers. Dodge little suspects that he is seen as an annoyance and even an embarrassment to the Effinghams and the "better" English passengers with whom they associate. "I believe few men cross the ocean together that are more harmonious in sentiment, in general, than has proved to be the case between you, and Sir George, and myself" asserts Dodge, "glancing obliquely and pointedly at the rest of the party, as if he thought they were in a decided minority" (210). The irony of this statement, which he addresses to Monday before his first performance as "Active Inquirer," is compounded by his unawareness that the Sir George mentioned is an imposter. His special efforts to ingratiate himself with the aristocrat, meant to display his staunch belief in egalitarianism and right as an American to claim recognition from anyone he chooses, manage to achieve the opposite, as they recognize that such a person's respect is a particular feather in one's cap. What's more, his failure to identify the imposter demonstrates his lack of the very cosmopolitan power to read and understand foreigners that he claims. The

Effinghams, on the other hand, are able to see through the assumed names used by certain *Montauk* passengers, as well as to naturally attract the sympathetic company of the real aristocrat.

The writings of the “Active Inquirer” are satiric gems. Cooper uses Dodge not only to embody what he sees as the wrong sort of traveling American, but to spoof what he sees as the wrong kind of travel writing; the Inquirer’s letters simultaneously mock the failure of American tourists to properly experience foreign cultures and the writings (or slanders) of travelers to the U.S. who failed in the same endeavor. He reads in a “grave didactic tone” (212).

‘*Dejjuned* at ten, as usual, an hour that I find exceeding unreasonable and improper, and one that would meet with general disapprobation in America. I do not wonder that a people get to be immoral and depraved in their practices, who keep such improper hours. [...] I impute much of the corruption of France to the periods of the day in which the food is taken’ (212)

The company begins to be amused, although when Dodge goes on to label French women as “dissipated,” Mademoiselle Viefville protests. But Dodge returns that his information is unimpeachable: his source is “an English gentleman who has resided twelve years in Paris” (ibid.). Dodge’s “informant” is not a native, but a greater impediment to his understanding of the French lies in his failure to imagine that one may drink and not become a drunkard. Dodge continues to amuse the company (and upset Mademoiselle), with a conflation of countess and prostitute, comparison of King and American schoolmaster, and his judgment of “*Notter Dam*”: “I was painfully impressed with the irreligion of the structure, and the general absence of piety [...] The building is much inferior in comfort and true taste to the commoner American churches, and met with my unqualified disapprobation” (214). The Active Inquirer’s French is a running joke throughout the scene; as Dodge speaks Eve quietly “translates” the “French” words he sprinkles into his text for Mademoiselle.

In the sequel to this scene, the captain tries to help Dodge put a better face forward.

Consistently concerned with his responsibility for his passengers' well-being, Truck sympathizes with the Effingham frustration with Dodge but does not utterly give up on him. Knowing of Dodge's utter failure to gauge the reactions of his audience, Truck tries to help by suggesting that he share his insights on England. As Truck has visited there, he feels he could better estimate Dodge's impressions by comparing them with his own. He also senses the obstacle that the language barrier may have presented to Dodge's full understanding of continental Europe. Dodge, though, dismisses the importance of language.

"Paris, London, or the Rhine, are the same to me; I have seen them all, and am just as well qualified to describe the one as to describe the other."

"No one doubts it, my dear sir; but I am not as well qualified to understand one of your descriptions as I am to understand another. Perhaps, even you, sir, may express yourself more readily, and have better understood what was said to you, in English, than in a foreign tongue."

"As for that, I do not think the value of my remarks is lessened by the one circumstance, or enhanced by the other, sir. I make it a rule always to be right, if possible; and that, I fancy, is as much as the natives themselves of the countries can very well effect." (473-4)

Dodge misses the Captain's hint that he might be better able to describe a country where the language, at least, was not foreign to him. Dodge does not engage with the places he goes, or the people who live there; when he reads the foreign cultures he visits (usually from afar) his only guide is his own mind.

This time, Dodge not only reads from his journal but also shares some excerpts from American reviews of the already-published portions. Cooper continues his satire of the travel writing controversies in these pieces, which give a sense of Dodge's philosophy of travel and travel writing. One "review" remarks that Dodge's "opinions meet with our unqualified approbation"

(unlike Notter Dam, one notices) “being sound, American, and discriminating. We fancy these Europeans will begin to think in time that Jonathan has some pretty shrewd notions concerning themselves, the critturs!” (477). A second “rejoices” that Dodge “finds no reason to envy the inhabitants of the Old World any of their boasted civilization; but on the contrary, he is impressed with the superiority of our condition over all countries” (478.) His admission that he could not communicate with the inhabitants he does not envy should undermine the value of his opinion.

These reviewers stand for an American audience with strong and specific expectations of the travel writing they read. They read dispatches from abroad not to learn about foreign subjects but to reassure themselves that they have nothing to learn; foreign subjects have nothing they need. In their name-calling disdain and self-satisfied complacency, the reviewers miss much that is of value by failing to seek real insights from travel writing, and, by extension, from travel. Such an approach leads to a loss of an opportunity for reflection and self-improvement; travelers will see what they expect to see. “Unqualified approbation” of anything simply because it is “American” is patriotism dangerously misdirected, and blind belief in one’s cultural “superiority” over all others essentially anti-cosmopolitan.

In sum, Dodge’s observations fail to convey an accurate description of their foreign subject. The following description encapsulates Cooper’s criticism of Dodge’s type, that display the self-complacency of besotted ignorance and provincial superciliousness. Searching out a place to his mind, this profound observer of men and manners, who had studied a foreign people, whose language when spoken was gibberish to him, by traveling five days in a public coach, and living four weeks in taverns and eating-houses, besides visiting three theatres, in which he did not understand a single word that was uttered, proceeded to lay before his auditors the results of his observations. (477)

Dodge’s cross-cultural mission is doomed to fail, plagued by wrong motives and wrong methods. Not only does he fail to go about his foreign discovery in the correct way, traveling too fast and

ignoring language differences (mark Cooper's extended stay abroad and sustained efforts, begun before leaving home, at language study), he also fails to be receptive to new ideas. As a result, his travel writing can only perpetuate old ideas, and thus fails at conveying information. To a native, his opinions on France are either unintelligible or insulting. To Eve, they are upsetting. Having been the right kind of traveler, she looks forward to returning to a home she hasn't known since early childhood, and expects to find a place she can appreciate as much as she had the European milieu in which she was raised. She understands and appreciates not only the French language but European cultures, and is pained to see them maligned so ignorantly by a countryman.

Dodge's philosophy gives readers and Effinghams alike a preview of what they will find when the *Montauk* reaches its destination. Several times in Homeward Bound, John Effingham warns his cousin that he will notice much has changed in the United States. The nature of these found changes, however, and the frequency that they focus critically on dealings with foreign cultures, indicate that some of the changes lie at least as much in the observer as in the observed. Even once the journey is over, and the Effinghams are home, travel continues as a primary theme, and the way Americans travel and react to their foreign experiences a main target of criticism. While some changes doubtless occurred in American culture between 1826 and 1833, the travel writing controversy both started earlier and continued longer than those dates of Cooper's travel. What he learned of foreign cultures in his time abroad informed the way that he thought of his own. Contrasting the Effinghams' cosmopolitanism with the ignorance of less careful travelers demonstrates the patriotic benefits that come from cross-cultural learning; living among foreigners makes you a better American. Relying on the reports of travelers for information is dangerously misleading, as it corrupts not only one's understanding of the wider world but the society one creates.

The opening pages of Home as Found shed some light on the motivations that lured Steadfast Dodge overseas. When Eve reunites with her cousin Grace, she learns, to her confusion,

that she is a “hajji.” As Grace clarifies, this means that Eve has been to Paris—“that makes a Hajji in New York” (13). Grace explains that the hajjis dictate fashion in the city and are the centers of the social scene. Mentioning a specific Hajji family, Grace asks Eve if she will visit them.

“Certainly, if they are in society and render it necessary by their own civilities.”

“They are in society, in virtue of their rights as Hajjis; but as they passed three months at Paris, you probably know something of them.”

“They may not have been there at the same time with ourselves,” returned Eve, quietly, “and Paris is a very large town. Hundreds of people come and go that one never hears of. I do not remember those you have mentioned.”

“I wish you may escape them, for, in my untravelled judgment, they are anything but agreeable, notwithstanding all they have seen, or pretend to have seen.”

“It is very possible to have been all over Christendom, and to remain exceedingly disagreeable; besides, one may see a great deal, yet see very little of a good quality.” (14)

Grace acknowledges the hajjis’ status even as she admits she doesn’t like them; there is a tinge of jealousy in her statement that they have their position in society only because they have made the “pilgrimage” to Europe. Eve’s information that “Paris is a very large town” reinforces that travel differentiates her from her cousin, whose only urban frame of reference is New York City; at the same time, she offers to confirm Grace’s “untravelled judgment” of the hajjis. Eve lets Grace know that she does not estimate people by their travels, thus demurring the superior position (as hajji) Grace offers. While Eve knows more about the world than Grace, who has had no opportunity to travel, she does not believe this to be a mark of superiority.

Perhaps as a result of having passed this tentative test, Eve faces a question which Grace will repeat on several occasions: “I wish I knew your real opinion of us, Eve, [...] Why not be frank with so near a relative; tell me honestly, now—are you reconciled to your country?” (15). The question reveals that despite her admission that she finds them unpleasant, the hajjis’ status is

real to Grace. She believes in European cultural superiority, and wants to hear one who has been to Europe affirm the United States. While Dodge's reaction to Europe is different, his motivation for going to Europe was similar—he worried that European culture was “superior.” Both Dodge and the New York hajjis claim a social benefit from their travels. Dodge gains favor by dismissing all things European in favor of the American, and the hajjis achieve the same by doing the opposite: a circumstance that reveals the complexity of domestic feelings about American cultural identity. Eve disapproves of both approaches. In the exchange provoked by Grace's question, she reveals her displeasure at the simultaneous subservience and arrogance Americans tend to display towards foreign cultures. Not surprisingly, the question of travel writing comes into play as well.

“You are the eleventh person who has asked me this question, which I find very extraordinary, as I have never quarreled with my country.”

“Nay, I do not mean exactly that. I wish to hear how our society has struck one who has been educated abroad.”

“You wish, then, for opinions which can have no great value, since my experience at home extends only to a fortnight. But you have many books on the country, and some written by very clever persons; why not consult them?”

“Oh! You mean the travelers. None of them are worth a second thought, and we hold them, one and all, in great contempt.[...] Eve, you do not support these travelers in all that they have written of us?”

“Not in half, I can assure you.” (15)

Though not in name, Grace is an Effingham, and Eve here is helping her gain the proper outlook. First, she espouses care before one pronounces one's “opinion” of anyone's “society.” After two weeks' residence in New York, she is unwilling to claim knowledge of conditions there. Perhaps because of this sensitivity to the time and effort it takes to get to know new places, Eve also does not approve of overvaluing the opinions of foreigners. A foreigner (or a native educated abroad)

does not understand a place like a native does; only by special effort can they understand it to any degree. Too polite to simply tell Grace that her desire to have the approval of foreigners is misguided, Eve brings up the writings of “the Travelers,” hoping this will help Grace to arrive at the proper mindset: the “travelers” have much in common with the hajjis. When Eve suggests that Grace turn to these infamous books of travel writing she is not implying that there are insights to be found there. On the contrary, she believes (albeit without reading them herself) they are at least half wrong. Eve’s point is that if you value an opinion simply because it is foreign and not because you have come to know and esteem its author, you might as well look anywhere, for the information you get will be worth nothing. Condemning the travelers and the Americans who reacted to them so stridently with one blow, Eve models careful cosmopolitanism for her inexperienced cousin. When conducting oneself as an American on a world stage, one must neither subserviently defer to the opinions of others nor arrogantly dismiss their ways without careful consideration.

Upon learning of their existence, Eve suspected that the hajjis afforded such honor in New York would be most often travelers à la Dodge, using their travel to their own purposes rather than experiencing foreign cultures on their own terms. This is confirmed, when, at a gathering hosted by the fashion-mad Mrs. Jarvis, Dodge is introduced to the Effinghams and company as “a great traveler, a most interesting man” (60). Pulling Dodge, the “lion” of the evening, from the circle of New York ladies that surround him, Mrs. Jarvis explains that Dodge “has a prodigious knowledge of things on the other side of the water” (61). Eve is disgusted by the positive attention Dodge gets as the world traveler and writer of the *Active Inquirer*, all from people who have not even read the letters in question. Dodge’s hypocrisy is exposed. Though Dodge was dismissive and even disdainful of European culture, he is not averse to capitalizing on the caché afforded him as a hajji. Nor does he see any discord between the content of his letters, which condemn European culture as inferior, and the unqualified admiration he receives in American society, presumably for having been accepted in that very culture.

American culture, not European, is the subject under discussion in the Home novels. That discussion, begun in Homeward Bound, can be sorted into two questions: 1) What is American culture, i.e. how are Americans going to conduct themselves as a society and 2) how should that culture interact with foreign ones? The first issue deals not only with the social scene – what do we eat? when? with whom? – but with such things as child-rearing, rituals, household arrangements, et cetera. The second is, of course, thoroughly linked with the first. In the context of the cultural moment, it is, in fact, the reason the first had become so much in need of an answer. The travel writing troubles, followed soon after by the Dodgian “hajji” troubles, pointed out what could be a dangerous vacuum. If being “American” was to carry a meaning in the same way that being “English” or “Italian” or even “Iroquois” did, then what exactly would that meaning be? American culture could not develop as others seemed to have, over centuries of trial and error and evolution. Cultural identity in the United States could not be organic but would have to be proactively defined. Surely that work should not be accomplished by foreign travel writers—but who then?

One impulse was to turn inward; just as Emerson would call for an original, non-imitative literature, some sought an American behavioral paradigm in American sources. This led to attempts to center all aspects of American culture in the American Constitution. This is the approach practiced so doggedly by Steadfast Dodge. The foundational concept is egalitarian republicanism, enacted in hysterical adherence to the dictates of public opinion and fear of distinctive individuality in any form. Soon after he appears, Dodge’s philosophy is revealed with the information that he is “accustomed to think, act, almost to eat and drink and sleep, in common; or, in any other words, from one of those regions in America, in which there was so much community, that few had the moral courage, even when they possessed the knowledge, and all the other necessary means, to cause their individuality to be respected” (HB 55). When they do things like not invite him into their cabin (106), Dodge considers the Effinghams rude, because he sees such exclusivity as contrary to a republican spirit. He believes any man can fill any role in society, whether that role is

critic, president, or intimate friend. To seek distinction - or even privacy - in any form is to go against the common good.

This version of American-ness was particularly problematic on the world stage, as Americans like Dodge tended to extend their belief in their own right to access anyone to European climes they visited, and the lack of subtlety, thoughtfulness and depth with which they approached their own values left them utterly unequipped for cross-cultural learning. In addition, if American culture offered only ruthless egalitarianism, then the danger was that Americans could only look to Europe for means of improving themselves. Cooper articulates this propensity, which threatened to prevent the development of American identity, in another analysis of Steadfast Dodge: “ultra as a democrat and an American, Mr. Dodge had a sneaking predilection in favor of foreign opinions [...] whatever reached him in the form of a European journal, he implicitly swallowed whole” (HB 250). This “peculiarity of judgment,” shared by the hajjis and the New Yorkers who enable them, is a far cry from the Effinghams’ considered patriotism, which accepts or dismisses nothing for its cultural origin alone. Paradoxically, the same man who was so “painfully” impressed with a Europe in which he found “nothing to envy” hungers for printed guidance from Europeans: those who don’t understand and respect foreign cultures risk becoming subservient to them. On the other hand, Edward Effingham and his daughter are loyal to their country and believe in the superiority of the American political system, but this does not preclude their showing respect for the cultural practices of other nations. They have close foreign friends and a deep appreciation for European society, scenery, and arts, but feel themselves deeply American and would not consider removing permanently abroad.

Although they have “ascertained...by tolerably extensive observation, that the moral difference between men is of no great amount,” (HaF 283) they enjoy cultural difference, and especially their own ability to read and understand individuals from foreign culture. This was on display when Dodge boarded the *Montauk*, and often comes up as subject of discussion between

the Effinghams and their friends in both novels. Such discussions are consistently linked with either speculation on the cultural identity of a new acquaintance or, more often, with debate on the state or international reputation of American national character. An example is the conversation that Eve, Paul Powis, and Sir George Templemore have on the grounds of the Wigwam in Home as Found. Eve initiates by asking what the Englishman thinks of American women. When, out of uncertainty, caution, or politeness, Templemore provides an unsatisfactory answer, Eve mentions a woman they have met in the United States. Templemore still does not seem to grasp Eve's meaning.

“[...] Mrs. Bloomfield—she is clever, exceedingly clever, I allow; in what is her cleverness to be distinguished from that of one of her sex on the other side of the ocean?”

“In nothing, perhaps, did there exist no differences in national characteristics. Naples and New York are in the same latitude, and yet, I think you will agree with me that there is little resemblance in their populations.”

“I confess I do not understand the allusion—are you quicker witted, Powis?”

“I will not say that,” answered Paul; “but I think I do comprehend Miss Effingham's meaning. You have traveled enough to know, that, as a rule, there is more aptitude in a southern than in a northern people. They receive impressions more readily, and are quicker in their perceptions.”

“I believe this to be true; but then, you will allow that they are less constant, and have less perseverance?”

“In that we are agreed, Sir George Templemore,” resumed Eve, “though we might differ as to the cause. The inconstancy of which you speak, is more connected with moral than physical causes, perhaps, and we, of this region, might claim an exemption from some of them [...] I think the American woman, when she does rise above mediocrity, is particularly to be distinguished from the European. The latter, as a genius, is almost always

in the clouds, whereas Mrs. Bloomfield, in her highest flights, is either all heart or all good sense. The nation is practical, and the practical qualities get to be imparted even to its highest order of talents.” (278-9)

In this exchange, Eve makes a case for culture as a set of characteristics shared by a national group and argues that the cultural category is not passively received. Culture is not tied to a place but it rises from the “moral” nature of the people living there. Although some cultural characteristics are influenced by climate, moral forces can overcome such influences. The United States can claim the best features of both “southern” (it shares a latitude with Naples) and a “northern” (it shares a language and some degree of cultural heritage with Britain) culture. The American project is validated; the U.S. can be proactive in forming its character. The example Eve uses to further develop her point is of the economic power of nationalized religion in England operating on the character of English citizens. Culture, which can be difficult to define, is thus tied to something more concretely established, and the cultural “rules” that govern behavior are shaped by the written rules of the political system. Eve’s approach here is similar to the one Cooper took in Notions of the Americans: ameliorate the difficulty of articulating cultural difference by resorting to more institutionalized, tangibly describable concepts. Like Cadwallader, Eve is addressing a European audience, although Sir George, enamored of Eve’s cousin Grace, is likely to be more easily convinced than the European populace as a whole.

Sir George and Grace are not Eve’s only projects. She is most interested in Paul’s ideas about American culture, because, although she does not admit it until the last segment of Home as Found, he possesses her “affections” through the course of both novels (495). By this time, Paul has made it clear that he is, indeed, an American citizen (166). This was a long-hoped for disclosure to the Effinghams, whose usual easy discernment of national characteristics met exception in Paul’s case. When they meet the young man on the *Montauk*, they remember spending an agreeable time with him as fellow travelers on the continent. They declare their respect for him

and happiness at their reunion; unlike Dodge, he is freely admitted into the Effingham circle. Still, no one can be quite sure of his nationality (evidently, it would be *de trop* to ask). Templemore (as Mr. Sharp) asks Eve if “Blunt” is a countryman, she answers “I have long been at a loss to determine whether [he] is an Englishman or an American, or indeed, whether he be either” (84). She admits that he was well-liked in the highest circles of German society, where he “made a good figure; was quite at his ease; [spoke] several languages almost as well as the natives of the different countries themselves” and yet “no one seemed acquainted with his history;” what’s more, Eve reveals that “at Vienna, many even believed him to be a German” (86). Even over an eventful crossing’s worth of association, neither the Effinghams nor Templemore – representing the most refined of their respective native lands – can determine Paul’s “national character”—though the latter admits that he wishes he “dared to ask” (87), both men seem too gentlemanly for that to be a possibility.

Paul is cosmopolitanism personified, and his trajectory over the Home novels from the semi-mysterious “Mr. Blunt” to Effingham heir is the keystone that binds the cosmopolitan ideal to the proper destiny of American identity. Soon after his cultural identity is confirmed, he is betrothed to Eve, and the fitness of their match is immediately reinforced when they are discovered to be third cousins. Like the Effinghams, Paul commands and demonstrates respect wherever he goes, has studied and appreciates several foreign cultures, is thoughtful and sensitive in forming and expressing opinions, and secure in his own worth. If his cosmopolitanism is so effective that his cultural identity is unidentifiable, that is not to his detriment. The “world citizen” sense of “cosmopolitan,” after all, gives it power. Not only can Paul not be easily categorized, or even, like Dodge, dismissed as ridiculous, he can gain admittance to any circle.

Paul’s utopian potential, though, is not all that lies at the core of his identity: he is a loyal American. He insists that any “unreadability” of his national character derived not from any intention to mystify, but from the simple fact that he met the Effinghams “as travelers;” he reminds

Eve that the Effinghams never “expressly stated in my presence that [they] were Americans” (364). Though he admits he was then unsure of the place of his birth, he explains that he enlisted in the Navy of the United States because that was the country he “first knew, and certainly best loved” (365). The new generation of Effinghams embodies a vision of a performance of American culture that will command the admiration of the world for its merit. Their American cosmopolitanism is a winning combination: staunch patriotism fueled by thorough, respectful understanding of the foreign and consideration of international interests. Paul’s ability to read others who can not read him is a very (to use Eve’s terms) “practical” American advantage. Believing in the superiority of American ideals does not lead them to dismiss or ignore those of others, nor does it lead them to blindly accept any American as automatically right. They believe in the utopian destiny of the United States, but realize it is far from reality; it is the duty of Americans to help their country achieve its potential. American cosmopolitanism is their means to this end. Americans can best influence the world if they can effectively mix with it. The Effinghams have “educated” Templemore – who marries an American – and they will continue to act as ambassadors abroad. Home as Found ends with the disclosure of the Effinghams’ plans to return to Europe in company with the Templemores. They will mix with Europeans in a way that anti-cosmopolitan tourists like Dodge or the hajjis and many foreigners in the U.S. could never do: they will get the best from foreign culture without discrediting their own. Being abroad led the Effinghams to what in them was essentially “American.”

The Effinghams are to be taken for *ne plus ultra* models of cultured American-ness, but their extremely privileged position makes it hard to believe that the average American citizen could hope to attain match their level of attainment. When certain of their socioeconomic values are examined, it’s not difficult to see why some reviewers called them un-American. The Effinghams believe strongly in strict class division; Eve’s pride in the antiquity and status of her family makes clear her belief in the importance of birth (207). When Grace, whose hajji-influenced subservience

to European culture is not thoroughly dispelled, expresses her fear that the titled Templemore will look down on her, Eve roundly chastises her. She laughs at the idea that her cousin John Effingham would accept a baronetcy if one was offered to him—not because he does not believe in such distinctions, but because his status in the U.S. corresponds to a duchy or Princedom, not a baronetcy. If Grace believed in aristocrats, then she would be one of a higher order than Sir George. To Eve, her family is American royalty. Eve's utter disbelief that the lawyer Bragg would imagine her as a possible bride is topped only when she learns that he considers her maid for the same position; she cannot imagine such permeating "republicanism." While she may agree that persons in different social strata all have rights, she does not believe they have rights to each other. And the distinction is not of blood or breeding alone: the Effinghams are rich. John Effingham agrees with foreigners who criticize Americans for seeming mercenary. After an evening spent in New York society, he laments that "the desire to grow rich has seized on all classes [...] we exist under the active control of the most corrupting of all influences, 'the love of money'" (124). As, except for these criticisms, the subject of money only arises in Effingham conversations with the complacent reminder that they have more than they could ever use, their insistence that the less well-heeled should be similarly unconcerned with financial matters seems insensitive. In the Effingham philosophy, cosmopolitanism seems limited to a certain class.

Still, there are hints that this is not always the case, and the Effingham family pride may be a weakness but is not a fatal flaw in their cosmopolitanism and sense of social justice. At the July fourth celebration, Paul's unreadability is matched by many of the citizens of Templeton. Looking at the gathered populace, Sir George asks, "Where are your peasants, your rustics, your milk- and dairy-maids—the people, in short?" (353). He is nonplussed when informed that he is, in fact, among the "people, and not the *elite*," as he had imagined from appearances. This scene is meant as a sincere compliment to the people of the U.S., whose behavior is so often critiqued in the novel. Americans can not be as easily pigeon-holed as Europeans, and those of all classes can

become “cultured” to some degree.

Nor is this the only time the Home novels make the case that a cosmopolitan culture is an American inheritance available to all. Lest the majority of the American public (most them middle or lower class) think that the Effingham sensibility is not available to them – or not their responsibility -- Cooper provides a secondary character that performs a less-educated and less-refined but equally effective version of patriotic cosmopolitanism. The quirk-ridden Captain John Truck provides the narrative with a necessary amount of comic relief, but more importantly, he functions as well as social lubricant and representative American as he does as head of ship. Captain Truck may be over-enthusiastic in his introductions or under-schooled in landscape appreciation (321), but he is a seaman, and a seaman (unless, like Paul Effingham and Cooper himself, he resigns at a certain age) is not an Effingham, and shouldn’t be judged as such. He excels in his field and is appreciated for that by all. Just as the Effinghams move comfortably in social circles in Europe and the United States, “Captain Truck is quite as well known in New York as in London or Portsmouth” (HB vi).

Captain Truck can be even more cosmopolitan than the Effinghams, whose delicate tastes preclude their interactions with people from as diverse backgrounds as those with whom a career maritime officer has experience. Self-possessed and well-seasoned, Captain Truck is not one to be put off by petty differences or blinded by his own prejudices. He’s marked by an adventurer’s “*sang-froid*” that comes from having been “rocked in the tempest for years” (58) that serves him well in unfamiliar situations; he is not one to be rattled by foreign climates. He probably hasn’t read any travel writing of any kind – the naval manual “*Vattel*” being his primary literary source for everything from navigation to negotiation -- but Truck is aware of the less-than-enviable reputation his countrymen enjoy abroad (56).

When the disabled *Montauk* encounters an Arab raiding party, Truck gets an uncommon opportunity to show his mettle. As hinted at above, this episode is not really a cross-cultural

encounter, as the Arabs portrayed, drawn by Cooper from books rather than experience, do not represent any specific nation or group. They do represent cultural “others,” whose utterly unknown language and habits make them among the most extremely foreign cultures represented in Cooper’s oeuvre—even more so than the many Amerindian characters he draws, who can be approached with at least a few shared words and predictable or at least recognizable behaviors. In many ways, the Arabs function as fantastic objects of dread, or worse-case scenario blanks upon which the main characters write their fears and prejudices. But when Truck and his mate ambush a lone Arab, Truck can empathize with the captive. Understanding that they are strangers in Arab lands, Truck observes that “Perhaps the poor fellow fancies we mean to eat him [...] and he has some grounds for the idea, as he was felled like an ox that is bound to the kitchen” (269). When their attempts at sign language fail to quiet the man’s fears, they let him go. The narrator affirms the Captain’s sensitivity when he explains that these Arabs had a skewed view of Westerners from their interactions with shipwrecked sailors: “Had the sheik kept a journal, like Mr. Dodge, [...] some entries concerning the customs and characters of the Americans, [...] quite as original as those of the editor of the *Active Inquirer* concerning the different nations he had visited” (288) would have been the result. Truck is aware of the difficulty of cross-cultural understanding; he has witnessed its failure in more places than in Dodge’s journal. (Truck here expresses the exact thoughts of Catlin, who contemplated the shaming “chapters” Amerindians would write had they access to presses.) As the plot goes, though, good intentions or no, all attempts to communicate with the Arabs do not succeed, and the encounter ends in armed conflict. Still, Truck’s leadership throughout demonstrates his willingness and desire to be even-handed in his dealings with foreign others. Truck’s wisdom may be the most consistent in the “Home” novels. He strikes a chord early on when he pronounces that “If mankind conversed only of things they understood, half the words might be struck out of dictionaries” (138). Giving Eve a lesson on weather-watching, he makes an admission of what he does not know, and declared his observation that much profession comes

from ignorance. That declaration seems aptly applied to much of the transatlantic and domestic ill-feeling discussed in the novels.

Homeward Bound and Home as Found articulate problems of misunderstanding: between Americans, and between Americans and Europeans. As John McWilliams has noted, Cooper had discovered that Americans “know less than they think they do, and what they think they know is itself contradictory” (3). Cosmopolitan Americans like the Effinghams are misunderstood by hajjis, whose cross-cultural knowledge is specious, and by non-traveled provincials alike. Americans tend to be either too subservient to or too dismissive of foreign ideas. To a nation so in need of a unifying cultural system, the Home novels’ attempt to offer a solution is itself difficult to grasp. The problem is simpler: Americans and foreigners need more information about each other. A careful foreign education distinguishes Eve from Grace. The former has learned about the world from the world, the latter from the sketchy reports of those who have traveled less carefully. Grace’s problem is that of her country—the same problem that sparked the travel writing controversies: communication between the United States and other nations is poor. More meaningful exchange is needed. If Americans can settle on a cultural identity that values such exchange without betraying their ideals, their country will rise in the estimation of the world.

The “Home” novels are very much about culture—about trying to understand other cultures, and about self-consciously enacting one’s own. Much of what Cooper wrote deals, to some extent, with those themes. Because these novels are clearly based both on contemporary public preoccupations about and Cooper’s experiences with American culture and its perception abroad, what they say about culture as a concept can be overshadowed. Much of the cultural analysis in the “Home” novels is comparative, whether the discussion of culture centers on European vs. American or American as it is vs. American as should be. Although it is tangential to the subject of this study, the role these novels played in what came to be called Cooper’s “crusade

against the press” (Outland 7) or “quarrel with America” (Kennedy) should be acknowledged in any discussion of these novels. Touched off by reviews of the “European” novels (The Bravo (1831), The Heidenmauer (1832), and The Headsman (1833)), which Cooper felt were overly politicized and illegitimately personal, the controversy accelerated upon publication of Cooper’s angry “A Letter to His Countrymen” (1834), which only provoked further scorn. Cooper was criticized first for his use of European subjects (which seemed a snub to the American materials he had used so effectively), then for his own “Europeanized” behavior. Eventually, he instigated several drawn out lawsuits for libel against editors who published offending reviews; he won most of these, but they only added fuel to the fire.

Many of these criticisms stemmed from Cooper’s cosmopolitanism. By interacting so closely with Europeans, he seemed to be over-valuing their culture, and placing himself above his peers for his ability to move within it; he was putting on airs and acting un-American. Cooper tried to demonstrate that the preferable mode of Americanism was not the provincial, supercilious one practiced by Steadfast Dodge (not for nothing is that character an editor), who seemed to feel that the United States was the crown of human civilization and so its citizens had nothing to gain from association with foreigners. He believed that Americans could learn from foreign cultures; the United States was a revision—an attempted perfection rather than a reinvention of human culture. He knew that the skills Americans gained through cross-cultural learning would better position them to enact their global destiny. Such insights would “surmount the parochial nationalism of his American contemporaries” (Kennedy 92) and allow U.S. to act on the global stage. This, perhaps more than the perceived ridicules of the “Home” novels, got Cooper in trouble, as certain Whig factions (affiliated, not coincidentally, with the presses who published unfavorable reviews) resented his promotion of European liberalism, as it threatened economic relationships with the conservative European establishment (Franklin JFC xii) Cooper saw that this was another, possibly more egregious compromise of American values, and dug in his feet. He considered himself a

patriot and so could not tolerate accusations that he did not have his country's best interests at heart. The United States, Cooper was convinced, was destined for greatness but was not yet there. Seeing the link between the ability to understand foreign cultures and an effective foreign policy, he advocated cosmopolitan approaches to the foreignness.

Mann has uncovered a second motive of Cooper's opponents. The grievances of his political attackers, she asserts, was not just provoked by Cooper's work with Europeans but with "foreigners" much closer to home--Whig leaders' irritation with the author began with the publication of the first Leatherstocking book. Cooper's choice of Heckewelder's source material was a deliberate rejection of other, government-sponsored writings on Indian "ethnography" ("Race" 179). Explaining Cooper's revised 1850 Preface to the Leatherstocking Tales, Mann suggests that Cooper (along with Heckewelder and others whose writings contained sympathetic or simply humanistic characterizations of Amerindians) was targeted by a racist and relentlessly anti-Indian force, by then representative of the mainstream of U.S. public opinion and policy. Her research thus paints the libel trials – and the not unrelated initial relegation of Cooper to the backwaters of literary art – in a new light. Cooper was attacked for his informed approach to intercultural exchange. His refusal to dismiss foreign cultures (native and European) as irrelevant put him at odds with American powers who such a stance as threatening American interests.

I turn to an earlier, and more overlooked, work, The Monikins (1835) for a summation of Cooper's cross-cultural philosophy. Primarily a satire on American and European social and political systems, The Monikins is also an adventure story, and anthropological exploration is a big part of that plot. It did not gain a wide audience in its time and hasn't enjoyed too much attention since then. Cooper began writing as "No Steamboats," which dealt more briefly but as satirically on similar subjects, was in progress, but while the latter pushed the superiority of American principles by mocking European "Idées," The Monikins is an equal-opportunity satire. Like

“Steamboats,” this novel demonstrates the difficult work that cross-cultural understanding requires of travelers; uncovering the foreign can be an uncomfortable, even dangerous task, one that tests the mettle of those who undertake it. And the results of that knowledge can be dangerous, as well. Returning from his travels, Cooper's protagonist Goldencalf does not see home as the place where everything is done right; his study of foreign cultures has truly been an exchange, and he now sees his home in a new, critical light. Unlike the smug narrators of Notions and “Steamboats,” the cross-cultural traveler in the novel does not emerge from his explorations with his own sense of superiority confirmed. Instead, he gains a new perspective on the ways in which unthinking adherence to the forms of national culture can stand in the way of growth and progress.

Robert E. Spiller wrote that The Monikins “contains the germs of almost all of Cooper’s ideas” (237). Most of these are criticism of social and political realities that do not live up to Cooper’s ideas of republicanism, wherever they may be found: speculation, the money interests of government, the party system. Overall, though, the novel is also an argument for courageous cosmopolitanism. The story does not shy away from depicting the destabilizing effects of cross-cultural travel; its hero, Goldencalf, (temporarily) loses his dignity and his confidence in his own long-held beliefs. But rather than descend into chaotic rootlessness, he emerges from his adventures a changed but still loyal model citizen.

Goldencalf takes pity on a group of monkeys being tormented by an organ grinder. He buys them, and bringing them home, learns that they are not monkeys but “monikins,” creatures with the bodies of monkeys but the minds of men, explorers from a flourishing civilization near the South Pole. Goldencalf mounts an expedition to return them to their home, and in so doing, explores three of their “countries.” These three disparate versions of Monikin-ness comprise most of the novel’s satire, but Goldencalf’s encounters with the Monikins themselves (rather than the competing versions of Monikin-ness) provide the deepest insights on the practice of foreign encounter. The tiny, furry, naked and proud Monikins represent cultural “otherness” taken to the

extreme, and Goldencalf's unfailingly respectful behavior towards them, even at the expense of his own pride and comfort, display the strength of his cosmopolitanism, as do his efforts, on returning home, to reform the flaws in his own society.

Several of the cross-cultural principles Cooper presented in the works already discussed here are reinforced in The Monikins. There is a reference to the travel writing controversy, and the frequent failure of such writing to convey information about foreign cultures, as well as the failure of the written about to admit that the observations of foreigners have value: arriving in Leaplow from Leaphigh, Goldencalf learns that "certain Leaphighers had been traveling in Leaplow; and not satisfied with this liberty, they had actually written books concerning things that they had seen, and things that they had not seen" (386). There is the embarrassment caused by the foreign traveler's ignorance of the visited culture, as when the Monikins are offended by the humans' clothes (196), or laugh at Goldencalf's ignorance of their finance system, causing him to feel a new "sense of national humility" (195). And there is an emphasis on the time and effort it takes to understand a foreign culture, as exemplified in the exchange between Goldencalf and his fellow traveler, Captain Poke, just after their arrival in Leaplow and the "humility" mentioned above. Goldencalf explains that

[...] one of his experience should know that good-breeding is decidedly an arbitrary quality, and that we ought to respect its laws, however opposed to our own previous practices.

"I dare say, friend Noah, you may have observed some material differences in the usages of Paris, for instance, and those of Stunin'tun."

"That I have, Sir John, that I have, and altogether to the advantage of Stunin'ton be they."

"We are all addicted to the weakness of believing our own customs best; and it requires that we should travel much, before we are able to decide on points so nice."

“And do you not call me a traveler! Haven’t I been sixteen times a sealing, twice a whaling, without counting my cruise overland, and this last run to Leaphigh!”

“Ay, you have gone over much land and much water, Mr. Poke; but your stay in any given place had been just long enough to find fault. Usages must be worn, like a shoe, before one can judge of a fit.” (196-7)

This conversation encapsulates Cooper's cross-cultural advice. Travelers should respect the customs of the lands in which they travel, and not be surprised when those customs are unfamiliar; difference does not equal inferiority; productive travel is more than movement and requires time and effort; foreign ideas are worth of trying on, if only in the liminal space of a journey. Cross-cultural learning is a process through which one moves from ignorance through discomfiture to understanding and (possibly) adaptation. One should expect a period of unpleasant “culture shock”—until the new cultural “shoe” gets broken in. Goldencalf explains that the account of his travels was not hastily undertaken: “The result of much meditation on what I witnessed, has been to produce sundry material changes in my former opinions, and to unsettle even many of the notions in which I may be said to have been born and bred” (403).

Writing travel, too, is a process, and good travel writing, like good travel, may challenge rather than confirm the traveler’s ideas. It is difficult not to link this traveler’s admitted changes in “notions” to a statement James Fenimore Cooper made in a letter of 1843 in which he is looking back at his literary career. Notions of the Americans, he writes, “was condemned as being too favorable to this country. I now think so myself” (1/18/1843, 4:344 to Rufus Grisworld). Might this be seen as an acknowledgment that, in 1828, Cooper was undergoing a cross-cultural learning process that he did not yet fully comprehend? And that, in retrospect, he knew that his experience as a foreigner had changed him?

The Monikins ends with several pages of Goldencalf’s “CONCLUSIONS.” Of his journeys among the Monikins, he writes that “while it had its perils and disagreeables, it had also its

moments of extreme satisfaction” (401). He adds that his experiences with foreign culture have taught him “that civilization is very arbitrary, meaning one thing in France, another thing at Leaphigh, and still a third in Dorsetshire” and that “truth is a comparative and local property, being much influenced by circumstances; particularly by climate and by different public opinions” (404). The first statement reflects Goldencalf’s – and Cooper’s – noticing the ways that etiquette changes from place to place; the second clearly reflects not only the source of international scandals among the Monikins, but Cooper’s own bewilderment at the reactions of his countrymen to his work and activities. Cooper never became the reform-minded politician that Goldencalf did, but he participated in small-scale activism that reflected his cosmopolitan inclinations.

How Cooper employed what he learned as an expatriate to form and write his idea of American-ness has been the major subject of this chapter. I end with a look at how he lived those ideas. Cooper put his cosmopolitan insights into action, working to get involved in foreign affairs. In his seven years abroad Cooper developed relationships with a diverse group of Europeans, from luminaries like Lafayette, the Russian Princess Galitzin, or the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, to the business contacts he made in publishing his works in several countries, to the servants he employed at each stop in his travels.

As has been described, Cooper was pressed into service by Lafayette soon after his arrival in France, and he would stand by his cause of French democracy for years, even when those activities made him unpopular at home. Cooper’s advocacy for American opposition to the French government comprises the majority of the letters he wrote anonymously for the New York *Evening Post* in the spring of 1835. The first of these emphasizes the root of his authority: “I was in Paris and witnessed this maneuvering” (qtd Beard 3:65). Having enjoyed international interaction on a personal basis, Cooper deduced that such interaction should not be avoided on the national level.

Cooper paid close attention to goings-on wherever he went. As Kennedy has noted,

Cooper noticed Swiss heterogeneous disunity (97), felt German discontentedness (100), and foresaw the eventual union of the Italian states (118). But while Cooper was in Paris, the liberal circles there were beginning their decades-long championing of the cause of Polish Freedom. A generation earlier, Americans like Thomas Jefferson had mourned when the fledgling Polish republic fell to Russian, Prussian, and Austro-Hungarian empires in 1795, and its military leader, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who had been a popular hero in the American Revolutionary War, exiled to Siberia. The Pole became a figure of heroic suffering for liberty, romanticized in more ways than one; impoverished Polish aristocrats, who had lost everything in the cause of freedom, appeared as love interests in British and American popular fiction. Polish politicians and artists fled the country, and many landed in Paris, and forming an active and respected expatriate exile community there. Fervor for the Polish cause escalated in 1830, when a revolt against the Russians began in Warsaw. According to N.P. Willis, Cooper's home on rue St. Dominique became "the nucleus of republican sympathies in the great capital" (qtd Beard Letters 2:121). Cooper served American-style pancakes at the weekly meetings of the American Polish Committee (122), a group formed of American expatriates and Polish exiles as well as Lafayette and his partisans. The group raised money to be sent to the Polish fighters. Cooper's "To the American People" was circulated in the U.S. as a leaflet and reprinted in newspapers. "The crime of Poland," Cooper explains, "was too much liberty....Come, then, People of America to the relief of this much injured and gallant people." Passionate Americans, including a young Edgar Allan Poe, expressed a desire to join the Polish Army (Pope 124). The "Appeal" resulted in the establishment of Polish committees in Boston and New York, but the funds generated by these efforts did not make it across the Atlantic before the Polish resistance was beaten in September of 1831. For decades, though, the romanticization of the Polish cause progressed in the U.S.; American periodicals were littered with poems and stories that lamented Polish liberty [7]. In 1834, Polish exiles were received in New York. In the final report of the Paris committee, Cooper wrote, "We cannot refrain from urging every one of our fellow

citizens to remember, that when an emigrant Pole presents himself at his door, his hospitality and friendship are asked in behalf of a man that is the victim of a noble patriotism” (6/30/32 Beard Letters II:264). Elected to the Polish Literary Society in 1832, he would continue his involvement with Poles until the end of his life.

Cooper was not drawn to the Polish cause by principle or circumstance alone. In 1828, he had met Adam Mickiewicz in Italy. A poet of high romantic nationalism, Mickiewicz was a leader of the Polish exiles and a magnetic personality. He found in Cooper a friend who shared his literary and political passions. His months in Italy were among the most carefree in Cooper’s life, and his friendship with the non-English speaking Pole blossomed—so much so that rumors circulated of an engagement between Mickiewicz (whose wife was in Paris) and Susan Fenimore Cooper (Krzyzanowski 251). The friendship was important to Mickiewicz as well. Cooper’s works were addressed in lectures Mickiewicz made to the French Academy in Paris, and like Cooper and many other Americans, he associated the fight for Polish liberty with American independence (Krzyzanowski 77). In 1850, he wrote to Cooper in New York, asking if the two would be able to meet again in Paris (Letters 6:223).

Cooper’s advocacy for European causes modeled his belief in the possibilities for transnational influence that American cosmopolitanism would bring. A symptom of his lifelong fascination with cultural difference, his activism adds another dimension to his performance of cultural identity. Cooper understood that to avoid the stasis of xenophobic parochialism, and to act in a multicultural world, Americans must foster their ability to broker between cultures. As a Polish exile, Adam Mickiewicz was a practiced culture broker; the friendship between the two men, cultivated in what was, for both, a second language, was partly based on their mutual interest in literature as a nationalist project. James Fenimore Cooper was not the only American writer on whom Mickiewicz made an impression. His encounter with Margaret Fuller would change her life, and catalyze an involvement as an American in the affairs of Europe that went even deeper than

Cooper's.

Notes

1 For an excellent discussion of familial conceptions of the relationship between Britain and the U.S., see Jay Fliegelman, Prodigals and Pilgrims, the American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1770-1800 (1985).

2 For information on John Heckewelder and Cooper's use of his work, see Mann's "Race Traitor" (2007) and Michal Peprnik's "Moravian Origins of J.F. Cooper's Indians" (2006).

3 "Point de Bateaux à Vapeur" is published on the James Fenimore Cooper Society Website in its original French (transcribed from the online database [Gallica](#)) and in English. The English version is that of the unnamed translator who prepared the piece for publication in *The American Ladies' Magazine* in 1834, with revisions by Hugh MacDougall. The "Introduction" by the French editor quoted here is my translation.

4 This authorial reluctance is, of course, a convention in early American letters, a significant of whose authors insist that they "publish at the insistence of a friend...."

5 Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1740-1814), author and playwright known for vivid portrayals of Parisian life.

6 Some small part of the desire of American men to travel seems to be the allure of European "Gentlemen's Clubs" – compare the one Cadwallader turns down here to Melville's "Paradise of Bachelors." Since descriptions of such sybaritic locales seem to be absent from American accounts of European travel, I imagine they either remained impenetrable to tourists,

were kept secret by travelers lucky enough to gain admittance, or were largely the projections of hopeful American imaginations.

7 The most popular of these was Jane Porter's Thaddeus of Warsaw (1803), which was frequently reviewed and printed in the United States. Louisa May Alcott and Harriet Beecher Stowe were among the many writers who penned short stories or poems featuring exiled Polish democratic aristocrats as romantic leads for American magazines.

Margaret Fuller and the International American: “The Living Heart of the World”

Margaret Fuller began to think about foreign service at an early age. After serving three years in the U.S. Congress, her father, Timothy Fuller, cherished hopes that his support for President Adams would be rewarded with a position in a foreign ministry (von Mehren 30). The position never materialized. The disappointment was a blow for Timothy, but was surely also felt by his daughter, who, by fifteen, was already enamored with European art and literature and felt constrained by the provinciality of her life. Much later, she would again lament the fact that ambassadorships were most often granted as political favors, although the basis for her complaint was stronger. Acting on behalf of their country, diplomats had great power to do good or ill, and such power should be granted with careful thought. Her experience with the politics of the Department of State had taught her better than to imagine that, as a woman, she would be allowed to take on an official, remunerated role as an agent of the U.S. government, but pained by the failure of the Italian Revolution, frustrated by the absence of American support, and worried that her nation risked compromising its ideals and ultimately its strength by its inattention to the happenings of the wider world, she wrote a plea for a more responsible foreign ministry. Those sent to represent the United States abroad, she insisted, should not only be of sound character, but also “capable of understanding variety in forms” (*SBG* 245). That “capability” was a marker of cosmopolitanism.

Fuller’s emphasis on the urgent need for this “understanding” of “variety in forms” extended to all Americans. Her dream was for a cosmopolitan American culture that would be able to lead the world for the sake of the progress of humanity. Americans would be simultaneously citizens of the United States and of the world. Through her engagement with other cultures, she sought to fit her own to her ideal. In its focus on respect for difference, for individual potential and agency, and its encouragement of active involvement in the community, that ideal was decidedly

cosmopolitan in nature. Hers was not a consuming globalism, but a model of international engagement from the ground up. By extending the transcendental opposition to individual conformity to the cultural scale, Fuller hoped that thinking Americans would learn to benefit from the “variety” that surrounded them. She realized and demonstrated that cosmopolitans are made, not born, and hoped that Americans would not forsake the opportunities to learn that travel and engagement with foreignness offered. In her writing and by her example, she shifted the focus of travel from place to people, urging Americans to travel not only to see foreign places but to meet foreign people and immerse themselves in foreign points of view. Seeking to parlay the American consumer’s penchant for tourism into a more enriching, cosmopolitan experience, she called attention to the political nature of travel and the responsibilities of Americans to the world. Fuller strove to do what she thought all Americans should do—act, as Americans, for the world.

In this chapter, I will examine the conversation that Fuller hoped to have with her readers about what being American should mean in regards to interactions with the wider world. I will briefly discuss how Fuller's early career primed her for her cosmopolitan attitudes, and how in that she went against certain currents that flowed around her. I will then move to her travel book, Summer on the Lakes, in 1843, to see how she tested her philosophies in the field and came to appreciate the work involved in learning from travel. I am interested in the way that she relates her impressions of Native Americans as foreigners who suffer from Americans' failure to see them as a people worthy of respectful engagement, and her desire that her country not repeat that mistake in dealing with other nations. She regrets that she does not find Indian cultures accessible, but in so doing acknowledges that there is such a thing as Indian culture, and that it is worth knowing. I am also interested on how Fuller self-consciously undergoes a process of learning to travel and communicates it to her readers as a process that should become part of the American experience. Then, after a look at her developing reflections about that idea in columns she wrote for the *New York Tribune*, in which she further expounds on the treatment of the Indians and the “how-tos” of

travel, I will examine her European dispatches for further evidence of her cosmopolitan project. In sum, Fuller consistently conveyed her belief that Americans should act to make adaptability an important aspect of the national character of the U.S., so that Americans would be well-suited for productive interactions on the global stage and able to maximize their diverse domestic potential. Willingness to learn “new spells” (SoL 75) had enabled the rise of American society in the New World; Americans should not miss the continuing chance to learn from foreignness.

That travel was so popular among Americans was a good thing, but cosmopolitan travelers needed to remember that understanding a foreign country meant engaging its people, not just setting foot in its territory. Positioning herself as a model, she suggested that women were particularly well-suited to cosmopolitanism, but clearly believed that cosmopolitan conduct was a moral duty that would benefit all citizens. To be an American, she believed, was to be a cosmopolitan, and that meant treating foreigners in an open and just manner while being true to one's own ideals. To engage the world as a cosmopolitan American meant undergoing “sympathetic suffering” (SBG 237) that precluded detached isolationism and required careful engagement in foreign affairs--even when such engagement went against powerful forces in the world. An ambitious woman, Fuller was accustomed to pushing against social expectations, and she worked consistently to push for reform in the United States. Her determined cosmopolitanism made her a radical, even in liberal American circles.

Fuller embraced her American-ness, believed that her country held unprecedented promise, and dreamed that that promise could one day be realized: “We doubt not the destiny of our Country, that she is destined to accomplish great things for Human Nature and be the mother of a nobler race, perhaps, than the world has yet known” (Critic 126). Part of the second generation of the American cultural elite, she was deeply invested in the development and state of American cultural production, and in the character of American cultural identity, but by no means did she deem the United States, or its citizens, perfect. Her philosophy of self-culture, or deliberate personal

development, led her to think critically about herself, and she applied that practice to her country in a similar way. The important relationship between individual and nation was a constant in Fuller's thought and work; individuals were called to actions that would help the nation progress. Her unusual education and her intercourse with transcendentalists, liberal ministers, and other students of culture prepared her to be a cosmopolitan [1]. When *New York Daily Tribune* editor Horace Greeley hired her as a foreign correspondent, he allowed a woman optimally groomed to learn from foreign cultures and serve as a representative of her own the opportunity to fulfill her long-held dream of European travel, and introduced a leading cultural critic to a new field of exploration.

Fuller wanted the U.S. to be an international leader, but she did not believe this could happen in a vacuum. The U.S. was not created in superiority; its political organization imbued it with that potential, but government was structure, not content—a powerful tool, but not the product. To take the lead in all aspects of world culture, Americans first had to study what had come before and work to fulfill the promise democracy afforded them. In fact, notwithstanding Emerson's "American Scholar" call to "throw off the courtly muses," most Americans did not imagine that "American culture" could or should develop without reference to the world history that led to its appearance on the world stage. There was a reason American architecture in the early Republic tended to be neo-classical; the seed for the American project came from the historical past and was fertilized by ideas that developed elsewhere. In the realm of art, few disputed the merits of the European masters. Learned people were well-versed in classical and European authors and art and although they admitted it to varying degrees, their own creative endeavors and the means by which they evaluated those of others were influenced by these cultural resources. Still, there was a not insignificant nativist element in mainstream American culture, and when it came to *modern* Europe (or any other region of the globe), there was concern that engagement with foreign culture would lead artists to imitative productions that could never be truly American. According to this

mindset, foreign cultures were repositories of history but otherwise of little relevance. The value in Italy, for example, was in its Roman past—which held the promise that modern Italians had lost. Americans now carried the torch lit in the ancient Roman republic; thus, Latin, not Italian, was essential to a scholarly education.

Combating this trend by encouraging Americans to engage with living European culture were thinkers like Henry W. Longfellow and the rest of Harvard’s small and underfunded modern languages department, who had assumed the struggle to keep their subject in the curriculum begun in the previous generation by George Ticknor [2]. Study of ancient languages was more widely accepted as a necessary element of a solid education; nationalist tendencies in the political climate led to dismissive and even suspicious attitudes towards the study of modern languages. In 1823, Harvard students under the age of 21 required parental permission to substitute the study of French or Spanish for ancient Hebrew (Ticknor, “Reports”). This disdain for living foreign cultures led to a lack of receptivity to foreignness that persisted in American culture, which gave strength to the nativist movements of the mid-nineteenth century. Although she was always a staunch advocate for the United States, Fuller was firmly opposed to this protectionist exceptionalism. Fuller’s lifelong interest in foreign ideas is evident from her letters; even as a teenager, her correspondence included exchanges that shared, measured, and scrutinized her reading of contemporary European authors. The influx, in the 1820s, of a group of young Europeans and Americans who had studied in Germany gave Cambridge an unusually international climate, and the teenage Fuller eagerly took advantage as best she could (Capper 1:85). Later, leading subscription “Conversation” programs in Boston, she kept those authors on the agenda (303). Her insistence that diligent study of modern languages was an indispensable part of the education of young American men and women put her in the avant-garde.

Her column on culture in the New York Tribune provided a new venue and a larger audience for her argument against this tendency and for American engagement with foreign arts

and affairs. In addition, they highlighted the need for careful cultural brokerage and translation, and emphasized the work those projects required. She wrote reviews of works by European authors and artists, as well as commentaries on and performances of the same by Americans. Her own translations from a favorite German newspaper were a fairly regular presence. But Fuller clearly believed translation was imperfect and hoped her fellow Americans would not be content with this secondhand engagement with things foreign. Fuller's language columns reflect her keen understanding of the linkage between language and culture and the effort required to overcome this potential barrier to intercultural understanding. In "Study of the German Language," she asserts that "without intercourse with natives, and even in the scenes and climates where a language has grown up, neither thorough acquaintance with its idioms and fine meanings, nor full command of it in speech and writing can be attained" (*Critic* 293)). Even though readers of the *Tribune* may have had no idea that Fuller herself had never been (and would never go) to Germany, the fact that this was published in the same column in which Fuller had offered up her own translations speaks both to her fervent desire to expose the public to what she could from Germany and her recognition of her own limitations—she is not the standard to which Americans should aspire. To those who, like her, realize the benefits understanding a foreign language can bring but are unable from financial circumstance to travel, she offers encouragement:

Especially here in New York, there is no reason why every person, of any pretensions to a liberal education, should not be conversant with French, German, and Italian [...]. Let the young ladies take from dress and Broadway some mornings for this purpose, the young clerks some evenings from frivolous amusements, and that darling aim of approaching the social standard of Europe would find itself far better served than now. (*Critic* 293)

Here, Fuller notes the increasingly international atmosphere in New York and addresses the Americans Cooper named "hajjis" and their admirers [3]. They are dangerously misguided. First, she pinpoints the crux of their Europhilia: the desire – the "darling aim" – for the cachet they assign

denizens of foreign social circles. Then, she links that cachet with knowledge of foreign languages. Fuller points out that Americans would be better equipped to experience the European scene with the proper language skills, and even attributes some of the “social standard of Europe” to Europeans’ ability to converse in more than one language. She appeals to the competitive pride of her compatriots: if foreigners can master several languages, her readers should be able to do the same.

Fuller was also concerned with the tendency of Americans like the “hajjis” to downplay the work needed to gain fluency in a foreign language. Language-learning is more than a mastery of vocabulary and grammar; language is inextricably intertwined with culture and a complete understanding of one without the other is impossible. Acquaintance with “natives” and “scenes” allows deeper understanding of the ways languages work. Ignorance of nuances of custom or dialect can be nearly as problematic as wholesale ignorance, as Fuller warns in a column addressing “Instruction in the French Language,” in which she describes the diplomatic havoc wrought by real-life characters like Cooper’s Aristobalus Dodge:

To this great art [eloquence] Americans are so indifferent; indeed often appearing to prefer slang, cant phrases, and abrupt or uncouth expressions and intonations; that is not so surprising they do not know, when studying a foreign tongue, whether they have for their master and accomplished *littérateur* or a barber. As, however, the French do not share this indifference, and want of culture of both ear and taste, they are subject, through their carelessness, to become ridiculous the moment they set foot in the city, which is, to the would-be *elegants* and *lions* of New York, the Zion of their hopes, and the tabernacle of their faith. (Critic 384)

There is a warning, in the mention of things Americans “appear to prefer” that like it or not, the way Americans behave is defining their cultural identity. The use of “uncouth expressions” was one of the frequent comments of the “calumnies” and Fuller is noting here, as Cooper did, that there

was truth to this observation. Too many Americans assume their tendency to apply “democracy à la Dodge” to their own use of language applies universally. The problem is not that Americans tend to uphold fewer distinctions in speech than some Europeans but that they assume that since they are not interested in insisting on certain dialect interpretations, foreigners should work the same way. Fuller knew this wasn’t the case and didn’t think it should be. Doing the work to understand a foreign culture develops the intellect, and not doing so embarrassingly diminishes it. The views on language learning Fuller put forth in her *Tribune* columns did not change once she did have practical, first-hand experience with foreign languages; she continued to study languages as she traveled and never asserted that she had mastered a language to the point that she had no more to learn.

Fuller viewed travel as a learning experience, and so a means of self-improvement. She was a lifelong believer in the practice of self-culture, a legacy that would have been familiar to her Puritan ancestors but came to her by way of Goethe, upon whose writings she had honed her translation skills. Fuller expected to apply the tools she had practiced in literary analysis to the cultural “texts” she encountered. Accordingly she researched the places where she traveled and compared her impressions with those she found in books. She readily admitted her failings and ignorance, seeing both as issues to be addressed and opportunities for growth. She learned and adapted. Travel was not the only means by which Fuller practiced self-culture; as one biographer noted, “she never ceased to grow” (Deiss viii). Through engagement with as much of the world as possible, she hoped the U.S. could do the same.

An excellent analysis of Margaret Fuller as a travel writer has come from William W. Stowe, who posits that Fuller takes advantage of the polyvocal potential of the genre to display her subtle, complicated understanding of European and American politics. Shifting between literary, romantic, argumentative, journalistic, political and revolutionary modes, she “does not reduce all

these elements to a single, consistent narrative, but she does put them together and give her reader the opportunity to hear them talk to each other” (118). Surveying her work in Summer on the Lakes and her European dispatches, he asserts that

Her argument from the very first had been that women should have the same opportunities for self-fulfillment as men, that they should be sea-captains if they wished, or journalists, or efficient household managers, without ever repressing anything truly womanly in their characters. Fuller's life would have exemplified this inclusiveness if she had never written a line of traveler's prose. It is also fair to say that we would have known far less about it if she had not discovered and made use of the polyvocal conventions of nineteenth-century American travel writing. (123-4)

Reading Summer on the Lakes and the European dispatches in this way is indeed productive, and leaves space for the many dimensions of the message Fuller wished to convey to her readers. The book tries on various authorial voices and textual forms even as it records the different voices of the different kinds of people she encounters. Fuller's polyvocality demonstrates the conversational nature of her interactions with people she met while traveling, and to the vision she had for American culture, which would embrace “variety in forms.”

Fuller's exploration of foreign cultures demonstrates her lived engagement with cosmopolitanism. If not for her inability to support herself there, Fuller may have remained in the home she created for herself in Europe, proudly acting out her personal diplomacy as translator and correspondent, mother and citizen, bringing the European artistic and cultural legacy to the United States and American democratic ideals to Europe. As Leslie Eckel has argued, Fuller was “at once emphatically national and decidedly transnational” (27). Fuller espoused the ideal of cosmopolitan conversation in her work as well as her biography. To her, cosmopolitanism arose inevitably from the practice of good journalism—and good citizenship. Examination of Fuller's life and work reveals her discovery and practice of cross-cultural cosmopolitanism as the natural result of her

pursuit of intellectual growth and transcendental progress, and her hope that that practice could become a commonly American one.

“Courtesy restrains the pen:” Fuller goes West

The first original book Fuller published, Summer on the Lakes, in 1843, was based on travel. Susan Belasco Smith has commented that the trip that led to the book was an opportunity for Fuller to “meditate on the state of her own life and of life in America—both as they were and as she hoped they might become” (xx). The accuracy of that assessment is revealed in the text of Summer on the Lakes, which is only partly a travel chronicle. Details of journeys and descriptions of locals and landscapes share space in the book with poems, metaphysical dialogues, instructive stories, book reviews, and lengthy meditations on topics as diverse as gender and society and supernatural visitation, and Fuller’s narrator shifts in style accordingly [4]. Still, the book does not lack coherence, and the traveler’s voice remains predominant throughout. Stowe, terming Summer on the Lakes “conventionally eclectic,” identifies four different “voices” - literary, logical, romantic, and journalistic - present in the book, saying that all “help define Fuller’s stance as a writer and as a thinking, acting person” (117). In this, I find that the book goes beyond the “conventional” - Fuller is not only writing about her trip, and about the nature of travel, but about how Americans should formulate a key component of their cultural identity – how they deal with people and situations foreign to them.

The trip that resulted in Summer on the Lakes was Fuller’s first real experience outside the comfort zone of her native region, her first and eagerly anticipated opportunity to venture into the wider world and test herself in new circumstances. She makes the most of the experience, gleaned and refining her ideas of what travel should mean. For Fuller, travel is a process. Loath to arrive at

a destination, check it off on her list, and move on to the next, she is consistently introspective, scrutinizing not only the people and places she meets but also her own reactions to them. On encountering Niagara Falls (subject of the first chapter), she initially “felt nothing but a quiet satisfaction” that “everything looked as I thought it would” (4); she’d seen renditions of the scene and finds they were accurate. Her reading and curiosity have made her a well-prepared tourist. Persisting in her scrutiny of the falls, though, she finds “after a while...[their] own standard by which to appreciate [them].” The need to evaluate subjects by their own standard is a recurring theme; as she moves west, she has a similar reaction to the prairie, and notes that “It is always thus with new forms of life; we must learn to look at it by its own standard” (22). Understanding requires study; careful observation at the scene leads to finer appreciation than can be gained by even the most conscientious of armchair travelers. Learning comes only after a personal investment of time and thought, and even, possibly, ego. That realization helps Fuller to skip or at least get past many of the “culture shock” reactions that travelers face. She looks at travel as a form of study, and it is not surprising that a student as disciplined as she would throw herself so fully into the effort.

Fuller describes one instance of this willingness to think herself through her discomfort - at least in retrospect - as she describes her arrival in Mackinaw, which is unusually abuzz with activity as several Native American groups have gathered on the island to receive payments from the U.S. government. She has disembarked without her companions, with plans to explore the island and its environs alone. The Indians are making a festival of their stay, and she is excited to seize the opportunity to observe them. At the same time, she has not spent time around Native Americans before, and, as will be discussed below, she is not without prejudicial apprehensions about their safety. As she arrives she processes her mixed feelings with the philosophy of a seasoned traveler: “it was perfectly dark, and my sensations as I walked with a stranger to a strange hotel...were of a dismal sort; though it was pleasant, too, in the way that everything strange is;

everything that breaks in upon the routine that so easily incrusts us" (105). Fuller finds the situation simultaneously frightening and enjoyable—she does not convert “dismal” feelings into a “pleasant” ones, but acknowledges the thrill of the unknown, the adrenaline rush that can accompany facing one’s fears. She is more than a thrill-seeker, though, as she is convinced that her payoff will come in the sequel, when the unknown will begin to be the understood; her pleasure comes from an awareness that she is growing. As such she is displaying the skills of a cosmopolitan traveler. She does not deny her fears, but she does work to prevent her fears from provoking unproductive reactions.

Cosmopolitan travel is not only about undergoing novel experiences, though, and Fuller is eager to understand the people she encounters. She applies her critical principles to them, as well as to scenery and to her own responses. Like so many of her countrymen, she had tasted the bitterness of reading the gossip of foreign travelers in the United States and would likely have worked not to follow in their path even had she had such an inclination. Instead, Fuller works to control and understand her own responses, and to extend this courtesy to others, as well. She acknowledges the limits of her observations; her trip only fills a season, and covers a good amount of territory, and she is wise enough not to claim enough familiarity to make broad judgments about the people she meets (or doesn’t) in the west. Her decision not to include overly personal information about her hosts is an intentional comment on what travel writing should be and how travelers should behave.

The narrative might have been made much more interesting, as life was at the time, by many piquant anecdotes and tales drawn from private life. But here courtesy restrains the pen, for I know those who received the stranger with such frank kindness would feel ill requited by its becoming the means of fixing many spy-glasses, even though the scrutiny might be one of admiring interest, upon their private homes (42).

Fuller’s narrative would have been more interesting had she had less “courtesy.” The respect she has for the “locals” is more important than her text [5].

At intervals throughout the book, Fuller makes it clear that she is not an uninformed traveler. Rarely does she address a subject without reviewing relevant texts, recommending some authors and warning against others. At the time of her travel, though, Fuller was not so thoroughly informed, since much of Fuller's research (which included reading Catlin (SoL 112)) was done *after* her trip, as she wrote her book. Fuller had long wished to travel, but family and finances had always intervened, and she did not have much time to prepare for this journey. When her friends, siblings James and Sarah Clarke, invited her to accompany them on their trip in the spring of 1843, she was unsure she would be able to afford it; once friends offered to donate the needed funds, she rushed to meet her commitments to the *Dial* before her departure (von Mehren 170). Once she got home, she realized that she had experienced something worth sharing with the world and that there were gaps in her understanding of what she had experienced; only then did she undertake to convert her travel journal into a book (Smith ix). That decision affirmed her notions of both the value of travel and the difficulties inherent in understanding the travel experience. Although she always seems to have plenty to say and confidently to survey what others have said, Fuller presents herself unfailingly as a humble traveler, careful to remember her status as outsider and respectful of the world she is visiting. Before she publishes her impressions, she checks her facts to ensure that her opinions are balanced with those of other observers.

As it narrates the first real-life test of Margaret Fuller's cosmopolitanism, Summer on the Lakes lays the groundwork for understanding this aspect of her life and work. In writing that journey, she formulated and articulated her views on how one should travel, and how one should write travel. This includes how one should write foreigners, and Fuller's descriptions of Native Americans are an important component of the book. (Foreigners, here, in the cultural sense only; Fuller does not leave U.S. territory, nor does she fail to consider the claims of Indians to the "American frontier.") While the region Fuller's party visited was not the relatively newly-accessible lands Catlin saw, compared to her native New England they were unsettled and rugged,

and populated by a motley mix of settlers from the eastern states, European immigrants, and displaced natives.

At first, Fuller's perceptions of the Indians are tied to her perception of nature, and she links them, conventionally, with the rugged landscape. She did not have contact with Native Americans before she traveled west, but like all Americans, she had imbibed a sense of a simultaneously noble and primitive people "vanishing" from the natural landscape. Lydia Maria Child, author of the very popular Hobomok, was an early friend. Fuller admitted that some of what she had read on Indians was "overly sentimentalized" but allowed that writing like Cooper's was "a white man's view of a savage hero, who would be far finer in his natural proportions; still, through a masquerade figure, it implies the truth" (20). At Niagara, she imagines "naked savages stealing behind me with uplifted tomahawks" (4) as if inhabiting a scene from The Last of the Mohicans. Momentarily, she feels a frisson of the horror her ancestors likely felt at the presence of Indians, though this is of course a far, far cry of from the reality of her situation. In reality, though, she does not encounter any "savages" until several days later, on the St. Clair River. Seen from a boat, the people are markers of the place.

Coming up the river St. Clair, we saw Indians for the first time. They were camped out on the bank. It was twilight, and their blanketed forms, in listless groups or stealing along the bank, with a lounge and a stride so different in its wildness from the rudeness of the white settler, gave me the first feeling that I really approached the West. (12)

Leslie Fiedler's "vanishing American" has been internalized by Fuller, whose "listless" "forms" appear appropriately at "twilight." Fuller shows signs that she had taken in much of her era's prevailing attitudes towards of white Americans towards Natives, which Charles Capper has described as simultaneously imagining Indians as bloodthirsty, pre-civilized, noble, and rightfully "doomed" to disappear (2:148). It's clear, though, that the more she witnesses of actual Indians, her feelings develop (149). Once she processes her trip, and her subsequent absorption of available

reading material on the subject, she comes to respect Indian culture, regret its destruction and abhor her nation's behavior and policies towards Indians.

Seeing Indians marks Fuller's arrival at the "west." Like most Americans of her times, she thinks of Indians as having departed from eastern United States, and as now making way for white settlers in the west as well. The Clarkes, who invited Fuller to accompany them on their journey, made their plans with the primary motive of seeing the wild American landscape which, like Indians, was no longer available in the east. Western tours became something of a fashion with well-heeled American tourists of the time for just this reason; the term "the Lakes" was used to call to mind the English Lake District, source of so much cultural inspiration for the British empire. The American version is bigger and wilder and thus better, and American Indians, depicted, as here in Fuller's first glimpse, in the shadows, as part of the landscape, are its key feature---appropriated as American even as they are expelled from America [6]. While participating in this conventional identification of place and people, Fuller draws lines here she continues to employ on her journey, demarcating herself from white inhabitants of the American "lakes region" and their "rudeness" as well as from Native Americans.

But Fuller is not content to see Indians as fading features of the landscape. Even in this fleeting response, she notices them enough to notice the manner of their "lounge" and "stride." She later relates episodes in her book that demonstrate her efforts to have meaningful interactions with Native Americans, and her frustration and regret that such exchanges are limited or impeded by language and cultural barriers. Going a step beyond the romantic pity in popular fiction, she also points out the political realities that determine the situation, criticizing U.S. Indian policy and lamenting the treatment of the Indians by the American government. In fact, while remaining sympathetic to the losses suffered by Native Americans, she argues that the loss of Indians as cultural trading partners is an unfortunate consequence of Indian policies.

Fuller takes what opportunities she finds to interact with and learn from Indians—

inspecting their handicrafts, riding in their canoes. She makes the most progress with girls, who seem more willing than adults to indulge a strange white woman who seeks their attention. Some teach her about native plants and their uses, and Fuller allows that it is the Indians (rather than settlers or botanists) who have the right to give these their names (SoL 29). Even observing Indians from a distance, though, she learns to distrust common stereotypes, such as that they are a “taciturn” race (108): while they may not be forthcoming in their English-language interactions with invading settlers, she realizes this is not evidence of their regular practice.

Fuller visits one group of Indians in Wisconsin. These are “Potawammies,” dispossessed natives of the Territory, traveling through the lands that had been theirs. Fuller and her party decide to visit as the weather takes a turn for the worse. That circumstance leads to closer contact:

...we had to take refuge in their lodges. These were very small, being for temporary use, and we crowded the occupants much, among whom were several sick, on the damp ground, or with only a ragged mat between them and it. But they showed all the gentle courtesy which marks them towards the stranger, who stands in any need; though it was obvious that the visit, which inconvenienced them, could only have been caused by the most impertinent curiosity, they made us as comfortable as their extreme poverty permitted. They seemed to think we would not like to touch them: a sick girl in the lodge where I was persisted in moving so as to give me the dry place; a woman with the sweet melancholy eye of the race, kept off the children and wet dogs from even the hem of my garment. (74)

No verbal exchanges take place; the Indians either do not know or elect not to use English. The visit is as emotionally uncomfortable for Fuller as it is physically discomfiting to her hosts, who treat their uninvited “guests” with extreme deference. That deference serves to enforce a distance that serves, in turn, to remind Fuller of her “impertinent curiosity.” However she may prefer to imagine herself outside the situation, the encounter at Silver Lake places Fuller firmly in the camp (so to speak) of the colonizer, imposing herself upon her subjects. The language barrier is not

preventing exchange; exchange is precluded because Fuller is not meeting the Indians on equal ground. They have been defeated and (like it or not) she is aligned with the conquerors. She is sensitive to the fact that their present condition is the result of their expulsion from ancestral lands. Of course, there are assumptions made: what Fuller sees as deference could very well be repulsion. But she does realize that this is not a moment for exchange, because the past treatment of the Indians has made that impossible. Still, she does her best, realizing that the Indians are out of their milieu. She notes that the camps are “temporary” and thus shabby; had the Indians not been dispossessed, she would see more of their culture. Her embarrassment marks her respect for her hosts' humanity even as their foreignness precludes her making a meaningful connection with them.

Fuller's feelings towards the Indians in the hut were surely influenced by what she had been told by white settlers. These accounts, sprinkled throughout her narrative, tend to provoke in her a shocked reaction to what she sees as the settlers' insensitivity; she is repulsed by what she sees as mean-spirited obtuseness in dealings with Indians. When one settler complains that the starving Indians hunt too much game, and boasts of shooin' a meditating Indian from his newly-claimed land, Fuller sympathizes with the Indians: “I scarcely see how they can forbear to shoot the white man where he stands” (71). She analyzes the settlers' feelings as “the aversion of the injurer for him he has degraded. [...] OUR game---just heavens!” (72). Many settlers complain of the “dirtiness” of the Indians, and express disbelief at Fuller's interest in them (Capper 2:150.) Though she does not witness it personally, she even comes to the same conclusion as Catlin ultimately does about one of the more shocking aspects of Indian culture, writing of the Indian's spiritually sacrificial reasoning behind the dog feast that “there [is] religion in that thought. The white man sacrifices his own brother, and to Mammon, yet he turns in loathing from the dog feast” (SoL 114) But while she may have been rendered speechless by the settlers' lack of sympathy, generosity, and decency, she makes no call for action to redress Indian wrongs; she seems resigned to the Indian

situation, referring to the “fate” that did not favor them. Their time is past, but Americans should learn a lesson from the disasters of Indian-white contact and act more carefully in future intercultural adventures. The emotion in her exclamation “How could they let themselves be conquered, with such a country to fight for!” (31) prefigures her later identification with failed revolutionaries and her own sense of the connection between individuals and national destinies.

Dispatches from New York, and What Makes a Traveler?

Writing Summer on the Lakes, Fuller felt it too late to act to redress the wrongs perpetrated on the Indian nations, but she was eager to set the record straight when she could. The Indians may have “vanished,” but their disappearance is the result of an unjust banishment, not the course of nature. A year and a half later, Fuller addressed Indian issues in two reviews for the *Tribune*. She presented a lengthy review of Henry Schoolcraft’s Oneota, or the Red Race of America and Thomas L. McKenney’s Memoirs, Official and Personal, With Sketches of Travel Among Northern and Southern Indians [...]. Both books received praise overall for bringing Native Americans to the attention of the American public, and Fuller felt McKenney’s descriptions of the interactions of soldiers and traders on the frontier with Indians were honest and duly sympathetic to the Indians’ poor treatment. Like Catlin, she felt that Schoolcraft’s presentation of Indians was flawed in its failure to describe their ill-treatment and its consequences.

Mr. Schoolcraft says, “The old idea that the Indian mind is not susceptible of a high, or an advantageous cultivation, rests upon very questionable data.” He might have added, that the experiment has never been tried. For ourselves, brought up, like others, in the vulgar notion that the Indian obstinately refused to be civilized, and long ignorant that the white man had no desire to make the red owner of the land, his fellow citizen there, but to intoxicate, plunder, and then destroy or exile him, we have been amazed, on looking into

such experiments as have been made, at the degree of success which has attended them. In every instance where any fidelity was shown to the duty of reconciling two races opposed to one another in every characteristic of organization and manners, a surprising success has ensued. We mention this merely to do justice in word and thought; it is too late for act; the time is gone by when the possessors of the soil might have been united as one family with their invaders; nothing remains but to write their epitaph with some respect to truth. (Critic 82)

It is easy to imagine Fuller remembering her hour in the hut, failing to make any connection with the destitute “possessors of the soil,” as she writes that the time of potential coexistence has “gone.” She wonders what “might have been” if settlers had “united as one family” with Amerindians. Fuller understands that encounters between Euro-Americans and Indians were rarely seen as cross-cultural exchanges by the white participants, who viewed themselves as superior in kind to the Native Americans; the encounters thus became imperial rather than cosmopolitan. Fuller identifies that missed opportunity and the crimes that ensued as the greatest shame on her nation: “Spoilation, aggression, falsehood of the blackest character, a hundred times repeated, each time with increased shamelessness, mark every step of this intercourse. [...] The sense of the nation has been throughout, Might makes Right. [...] What does it signify what becomes of the Indians? They are red. They are unlike us in character and person” (465).

The ongoing expulsion of the Indians meant that travel was not only a leisure activity but also the sole means by which Americans could experience foreignness. Fuller’s summer on the “lakes” led to more than a travel book that was far more about people than about any place. It set her mind on exploring the cosmopolitan implications of travel, germinating ideas about foreign exchange that would stay at the forefront of her subsequent work.

In Summer on the Lakes, Fuller laid the groundwork for her assertion of her own value as a model cosmopolitan traveler. Enconced in passages that seem to have little to do with her trip

west, the book's purported subject, are unexpected glimpses of her travel philosophy. Among the lengthiest of these seeming digressions is a section in the middle of her chapter on Wisconsin, when Fuller's mention of the book she had been reading while traveling, *Die Seherin von Prevorst* (*The Seeress of Prevorst*) leads her into unexpected territory. The book inspires a meditation on the role of science and philosophy which expands to address the role of the individual in society. Though Fuller's choice of "travel reading" may seem incongruous (the life of a German woman with supernatural skills does not immediately evoke mid-western landscapes), her idea of her own role as travel writer fits with that of the gifted seeress. As a woman with extraordinary powers, the seeress predictably strikes a chord in Fuller; a medium between two worlds, the seeress is the ultimate translator. Fuller's creative response comes in the form of a "dialogue between several persons [...] and myself expressed as *Free Hope*" (78). With her discussants - but primarily with *Self-Poise*, a thinly-veiled representation of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Chevigny, Woman 149) - she debates the merits of the book for several pages. Fuller's position is the most expansive and the most delineated. Her cosmopolitan sentiments come to the fore when *Free Hope* explains to *Self-Poise*:

Do you climb the snowy peaks from whence come the streams, where the atmosphere is rare, where you can see the sky nearer, from which you can get a commanding view of the landscape. I see great disadvantages as well as advantages in this dignified position. I had rather walk myself through all kinds of places, even at the risk of being robbed in the forest, half-drowned at the ford, and covered with dust in the street.

I would beat with the living heart of the world, and understand all its moods, even the fancies or fantasies, of nature. I dare to trust to the interpreting spirit to bring me out all right at last—to establish truth through error. (SoL 81-2)

When Fuller rejects the view from a height, Fuller rejects not only Emerson's disciplined focus on self [7], but also what was to become a commonplace of travel writing. Conventionally, the trope of the tower allows the travel writer to "conquer" a scene by rising above it in space; from the mountaintop or steeple, disorienting cityscapes become readable maps and open spaces painterly subjects. In these scenes, which Mary Louise Pratt has described as "monarch-of-all-I-see" moments, the visitor, rising, panoptically, above a scene, simultaneously orients himself and masters the local by encompassing it in his gaze; the people who inhabit the space are diminished [8]. Like the majority of nineteenth-century grand tourists, Emerson was insulated from the foreign milieu (Reynolds 60). Even more so, his status as a well-known lecturer meant that he was aided by and interacted with a self-selected circle of interested admirers. By the time she went to Europe, Fuller admittedly had her share of renown and influential friends who could connect her with literary and activist Europeans, but her position was nothing like Emerson's. During her trip west, she was all but anonymous. But as Free Hope explains, she preferred it that way.

Free Hope's preferred way of traveling though the world – whether as a tourist or not – enables and requires the cosmopolitan exchange that vista-seeking Grand Tourism precludes. The latter's position is, as Free Hope described above, "dignified," "commanding," and, importantly, risk-free. Free Hope, on the other hand, acknowledges the dangers inherent in mixing in an unfamiliar world as opportunity's cost. She is less interested in impressive vistas than in the "heart," so she goes where she is likely to encounter the living inhabitants of a place. What's more, the dangers of travel "in the living heart of the world" are not limited to physical discomfort or even peril—such travel may cause the traveler to "err." Anyone learning a new culture is bound to make mistakes, as is anyone learning a new language. Fuller's embrace of this simple fact is key to her success as a cosmopolitan [9]. Those unwilling to depart from their dignified position, and the "advantages" of security and self-satisfaction that come with it, will not arrive at "truth." The "interpreting spirit" accesses individuals through their errors—in the vulnerability that comes from

cultural missteps or from simply not understanding what is going on. Free Hope asserts that she must experience these moments of confusion and acknowledged ignorance, and admit that she does not have all the answers if she is to arrive at a deeper understanding of the “world.” The foreign will remain foreign unless she immerses herself within it. Some embarrassment, or worse, may ensue, but that will be mitigated by the new knowledge accompanying it. When Fuller got her chance to travel to Europe, she aimed to put Free Hope’s plan in action. Since she went there commissioned to write regular columns, she may well have imagined herself a seeress—bridging the Atlantic gap between to surprisingly unfamiliar worlds.

In December 1845, Fuller reviewed several travel books for the *Tribune* in a column entitled “Books of Travel.” Though the column is ostensibly a review, its most important message concerns travelers, not texts. She begins with her ideas on who is best equipped to write such books, and, indeed, to travel. Acknowledging the fashion for travel among Americans, she realizes that such travel can be an assertion of class position—an example of conspicuous consumption. But, she asserted, the financial resources needed to travel are often easier to come by than less tangible but at least equally as important resources of character. There are many travelers, and many books of travel, but few in either category meet Fuller’s high standards. She identifies six requirements for travel writers, and all concern the ability to effectively encounter foreignness. (None address literary skill, so, at least in the enumeration of this list, Fuller is either not concerned with rhetorical ability or, more likely, fails to imagine that the traveler who meets her stringent requirements could fail to possess a concomitant facility with the pen; to write a good book of travel, you must be a good traveler.)

The first of Fuller’s requirements is practical: good health precludes a “morbid state” and enables “enterprise and persistence in striking new paths” (*Critic* 299). The second and third requirements deal with education: the traveler should have studied just the right amount. Too little, and he risks missing perspectives different from his own; too much, and he will be overly

“burthened with theories and opinions.” Travelers must also possess “poetic sensibility,” as cultures can not be observed without an understanding of “the heart from which they grew.” The fifth requirement, the mastery of discerning generalizations, is, like education, difficult to achieve at just the right level; generalization is an indispensable tool that is all too easily misused. Finally, the traveler must not be distracted; he must travel for travel’s sake. With that, Fuller explains that “All of these are requisites for him who shall see enough as he moves about to give us a full and lively account of what he has seen...and how few possess so much as two or three of them!” (300).

How does Fuller measure up to her own standards? For her, the requisite money and time were consistently difficult to come by, but what of the remaining requirements? Her health was never perfect [10], so she worked consciously to overcome illnesses and to understand their effect on her mental outlook. The prescription on education seems as if it could have been drawn from her practice in writing Summer on the Lakes (which she does not mention, confining her review to books on Europe): travel having read, and read more once home. “Poetic sensibility” is drawn from the Romantic/transcendental tradition to which she firmly belonged; the wisdom in generalizing and not could well derive from her work as a critic.

A bigger clue to Fuller’s perception of herself as a travel writer comes in the next paragraph, which begins

Among those [books of travel] we have, the best as to observation of particulars and lively expression are by women. They are generally ill prepared as regards previous culture, and their scope is necessarily narrower than that of men; but their tact and quickness help them a great deal. You can see their minds grow by what they feed on, when they travel. (300)

This assertion of the greater potential of women as travelers serves to introduce a series of works by female authors Fuller recommends. Women tend to make more effective travelers than men even though they face limitations men do not. Men have greater access to educational resources to prepare them for travel (they leave home better “cultured”), and men can travel unchaperoned and

access places that women, afforded a “narrower scope,” can not. Still, travel allows women to visibly “grow;” feminine “tact and quickness” implies a sensitivity to the reactions and feelings of others that helps in “observation of particulars” and so in diffusion of potential misunderstandings in cross-cultural exchanges. Fuller's judgment in favor of female writers is predicated on her belief in their better facility in what she sees as a primary mission of travelers: growth. To state that women are capable travelers was progressive; to state that they make better travelers than men is a characteristically bold assertion. A woman's gender, Fuller insists, makes her more cosmopolitan.

The notion that travelers who must contend with disadvantages often make better cosmopolitans is affirmed by Appiah. Individuals in a position of power can be less motivated to work to understand foreignness, because locals, out of fear or a profit motive, tend to accommodate them. “Most of those who have learned the languages and customs of other places,” he writes, “haven’t done so out of mere curiosity....Thoroughgoing ignorance of the ways of others is largely a privilege of the powerful” (Cosmopolitanism xviii). Humility can accompany a felt position of inferiority, and is conducive to if not requisite for cosmopolitan personal growth. One must admit one’s ignorance of foreign ways before one begins to learn them. Such admission may lead to a sense of inferiority that in turn carries a sense of vulnerability, and while this may discourage some travelers from crossing cultural boundaries, it may lead others to connect with foreigners by more readily accepting their help. This is what Fuller experienced, when, at the start of her European tour she was lost overnight on Ben Lomond. Locals participated in her rescue, and she wrote that “this adventure created quite an intimate feeling between us and the people there” (SBG 77). Asking for help – whether the help requested is directions or restaurant advice or medical assistance – can be a good way to start an exchange with a “local.”

So Fuller’s claim in “Books of Travel” that women make better travelers because of their inferior social status demonstrates her understanding of the position of women in American culture and of cosmopolitanism; women were less likely to possess that brand of confidence that becomes

cockiness and more likely to be accustomed to adjusting themselves to meet the needs of others, and as a result, they could have an easier time learning and adapting to foreign ways. Bell Gale Chevigny has written extensively of Fuller's consciousness of her sex as a potential liability, and she lists several instances of explicit discrimination in Fuller's life: studying Goethe, for example, Fuller "thought she would have to go to Europe to learn the details of the private life of the writer who had so liberated her spirit, for no American scholar would share them with a lady" (Chevigny Woman 146). Her interaction with figures like the influential Polish poet and nationalist Adam Mickiewicz would prove her right in one regard; she found, in Europe, partners who would share ideas with her on subjects Americans avoided. Upon their introduction, Fuller and Mickiewicz immediately formed an emotional and intellectual intimacy that she found compelling and new [11]. The newfound experience of inclusion was hardly limited to a lifted prudishness, as Fuller found Europeans enthusiastic to engage her in their political and intellectual activities. Still, she would also have experiences that would show her that a shift in geography would not lift all the restrictions that were placed upon her due to her sex—a striking example being the guard who would not admit her to a lecture at the men-only rooms of the Colloge de France because "c'est la règle" (SBG 109). Chevigny pinpoints Fuller's perception of her gender, and its effect on her position as a cosmopolitan traveler, when she writes that "her sex gave her a primary and inescapable sense of otherness" (Woman 147). The otherness that Fuller experienced as a foreigner remained secondary to the otherness she experienced as an American woman. The practice of constantly experiencing that primary otherness prepared her to negotiate her position as foreign other; in the field of cosmopolitan travel, her gender could be an asset.

The status of women was a consistent theme in Fuller's life and work, and she was well aware that she could not leave her femininity behind when she traveled. That required her to face obstacles a man might not have had to. Struggle as she would, she could never find a way to earn enough, and she was expected to travel with a male protector—though that was a convention she

grew willing to flout. She could not easily enlist as a sailor as an impoverished Melville would do or get a diplomatic post as Cooper had done and her colleague, Nathaniel Hawthorne, would do. These practical realities limited her scope. In her education, however, Fuller had advantages most women (and many men) did not. Her father sought to educate her as he would a son (Capper 1:29). Since she was in fact a daughter, though, she was barred from enrolling at the university, but did become the first female user of its library. She constantly sought out and maintained relationships with like-minded colleagues of both sexes. In her attention to self-culture, she worked hard lest she be “ill-prepared” to travel. All things considered, the description Fuller offers in “Books of Travel” pointed to herself as the optimal traveler. She met the requirements. She was also a woman, and one particularly equipped to overcome the average woman’s educational handicaps, to boot.

Fuller in Europe

The dispatches Fuller wrote for the *Tribune* from Europe were her last published work, and so discussion of them seems inevitably to link to events in her life. The writing *is* autobiographical in the sense that Fuller is recording her travels and observations, but in general, she did not discuss her personal life in her columns. Her time in Europe was, of course, eventful – romance, revolution, motherhood, marriage - and her dramatic death on the return voyage made it her biography’s closing chapter. She was able there to live more as she thought she should, to try out her plan for personal growth and participation in society in ways she could not in the United States. She traveled home with a draft of a book (which was lost at sea) she planned to write on the Roman revolution she had witnessed—a book she felt would be her most important. The personal correspondence that remains provides an intriguing if incomplete picture of Fuller’s unpublished experience, granting scholars a rich background on which to read her travel writing. That writing itself, though, is a rich chronicle of Fuller’s journey, and of her cosmopolitan hopes for the United

States.

The relatively “real-time” nature of the Dispatches mean that readers can track Fuller’s process as she adapts to travel and to the foreign scene. Though not quite as formally fascinating as the determinedly eclectic Summer on the Lakes, they are an intriguing mix of polyvocal travel writing and journalism, carving out an intersection between those genres that was the fittest expression for her model of American cosmopolitan exchange. While she labored to complete Summer on the Lakes in libraries, creating a book-length whole out of impressions gathered on a trip and her reflections upon them, the Dispatches were written on the fly, sometimes cut short to enable their passage to the U.S. on a departing steamer. Correspondent Fuller was a busy traveler caught up in seeing new places, meeting new people, and living with constantly-changing circumstances. She kept to an agenda of sight-seeing as well as viewing the social infrastructure and meeting with reformers in many cities. Like a backpacker emailing a photo of the Alhambra from a French internet cafe, she never catches up; there is always too much to report. She finds herself in Paris without having described the London theaters (104); she realizes that events in Italy are happening so quickly that whatever she writes will be out-of-date by the time it is printed in New York. Even though details of her private life are absent, Fuller chronicles her travel in Europe through her personal growth. She evolves as a traveler, and then as an expatriate, as she absorbs the world around her and the focus of her attention shifts. As such, the Dispatches read as uniquely fascinating travel writing.

Larry J. Reynolds sought to make sense of Fuller’s dispatches in the context of events in her life in his European Revolutions and the American Literary Renaissance (1988). His book draws well-deserved attention to the influence of events in Europe on American culture in the mid-nineteenth century, a period known politically for its nationalist movements and in literary circles for isolated exceptionalism. Reynolds observes that the influence of foreign events in American developments tends to be missed because the European effects of the revolutions were largely not

long-lasting (xii); for the most part, the revolutions of 1848 failed to found lasting governments and so may be overlooked as historical narratives are constructed. As they happened, though, they were at the forefront of American consciousness. Revolution abroad made an strong impression on American imaginations: Edgar Allan Poe wanted to join the Polish Army; Louisa May Alcott's fiction is generously sprinkled with romanticized European refugee-heroes. Americans feverishly sought news of Europe (including Fuller's dispatches), excited in part because it seemed as if foreigners were following the American example (10).

Reynolds points out that Fuller's understanding of and enthusiasm for European events went deeper. Europeans were not simply following America's example but seeking to become what America should have; while her countrymen, for the most part, focused on and celebrated the oustings of monarchs in favor of democracy, Fuller was aware and appreciative of the socialist roots of the new revolutionary movements (65). She sent news home hoping that Americans would be inspired to institute corrective reforms of their own. Reynolds also notes that the unique form of the Dispatches should not be overlooked: "Three features, especially, raise them far above mere journalism to the level of art: their shapely organic structure, their supple, powerful prose, and their use of a memorable persona" (62). That persona is created via Fuller's editing of her experience, whether to meet the interests of readers and the format of the *Tribune* or to hide her activities from judgmental Americans, and from her conviction of her own mission. She wanted to live not only as *Free Hope* but as a cosmopolitan American, seeking individual growth while struggling to improve the human condition for the world. But I am uncomfortable with part of Reynolds' analysis of Fuller in Europe. Remarking on the relationship between the persona in the Dispatches and Fuller herself, he writes

In many respects, Fuller's private letters...can be seen as forms of conversation, or at least as her attempts to approximate the spoken word in her written correspondence [...]. because of their personal, conversational nature, they at times treat what can be considered trivial

by a stranger (for example, the baby's cough, the servant's quarreling, the landlord's lechery). Her Tribune letters, on the other hand, are polished, objective, and elevated. And because they focus upon the fate of the socialist-republican cause in Europe, they are of interest to the world and not just to a small circle of family and friends. (78)

Reynolds seems to ignore the fact that Fuller's inclusion of certain details of her personal experience in Europe in personal but not public writing was likely, in part, to protect her privacy; in fact, some important aspects of her personal life were similarly kept from "family and friends." The popularity of sentimental fiction as well as travel journals, many of which included gossipy anecdotes of the behaviors of European servants (who, after all, were the Europeans most commonly encountered by the average American tourist), proves that the reading public had plenty of interest in what Reynolds lists as "trivialities." More importantly, to Fuller, the events of the revolution *were* personal. She scrambled for shelter, tended the wounded, and feared for the lives of those close to her. Furthermore, the Dispatches on the Revolution may be "polished, objective, and elevated" in comparison to certain of Fuller's private notes, but in comparison to her other published writing, that description is not entirely apt. As mentioned before, the writing often is admittedly hurried, and Fuller admits her dissatisfaction with that circumstance. Her persona does tend, at times, to an "elevated" tone – particularly when declaiming on the tragedies of the Roman situation – but there is so much effort at inclusiveness, such description of poverty and frustration, that the term is an insufficient descriptor. She was seeking to elevate – the Romans, citizens of the world, and the citizens of the United States – but she did so, as Free Hope, by circulating among, not standing above, the world around her.

Categorizing the dispatches has been a provocative and productive field for scholars, and recently Leslie Eckel has made a compelling argument that connects Fuller's journalism to her cosmopolitan worldview. Revising Reynolds, Eckel calls Fuller's mode of writing in the dispatches "conversational" and asserts that Fuller's "continuous participation in the work of

making American culture” was “at once emphatically national and decidedly transnational” and “modeled for her readers the kind of creative transnational exchange that she believed could strengthen American democracy” (27). Eckel observes that Fuller aimed to achieve her cosmopolitan mission by “goading her readers to transform society on a grand scale through imaginative cooperation with other countries” (28). This is a fitting articulation of Fuller’s efforts to apply the “Free Hope” philosophy to travel and cross-cultural exchange; however, the transformative cooperation Fuller sought was clearly not limited to the realm of imagination. Fuller’s cosmopolitanism demanded a more personal and active engagement

In Europe, her philosophy was shared and augmented by new and influential friends. Fuller grew close to Guiseppe Mazzini and Adam Mickiewicz, both of whom were leading nationalist movements in exile. Eckel points out that both men saw their work for their homelands as for all humanity; they believed that national renewal could be achieved via cosmopolitan means, and the world community could serve as a corrective to individual nations (29). Both were eager for Fuller’s support and to encourage Fuller in her philosophy of internationalism. Fuller saw them as living examples of patriotism strengthened by the experience of exile from their home countries, and they helped Fuller to refine a journalistic strategy that promoted national interests while expressing cosmopolitan concern for the broader human condition” (39). Both men found that only away from their homelands could they gain a widespread audience and viable platform for their causes; though their exiles were unwelcome, they were “fortunate” (42). Still, though she felt great love for these idealistic revolutionaries, this does not mean her mission was the same as theirs. Her “exile” may have been fortunate, but unlike those of Mazzini and Mickiewicz, it was also voluntary. The internationalism she sought was for all her country; she wished for a cosmopolitan U.S..

Many have argued that Fuller, too, found her voice and its ideal platform abroad. Bell Gale Chevigny claims Fuller found her “vocation” (“To the Edges” 173) in Italy; besieged in

Rome in 1849, she looked “with American eyes into the European future and report[ed] what she glimps[ed] to the American past falling in ruin behind her, hoping thus to renew and improve upon the values of the past” (179). Chevigny stresses that Fuller did *not* become or wish to become European, but rather found a way to be actualized as an American there.

Fuller was not changing the subject in going to Europe, not abandoning one field for another, but rather coming at the problem of democracy from another direction. She was leaving the New World where, to her eyes, democracy was paradoxically becoming old and confused; she was going to the Old World to see democracy born. (187)

Europe’s struggles against adversity, in contrast to the domestic complacency and foreign aggression of the United States, [made] it more “America” than America itself.

Fuller’s objective here [was] not to make an invidious comparison, but rather to repatriate the American project. (189)

As Mickiewicz and Mazzini provided her with models of cosmopolitan patriotism – of working in and with foreign nations for the cause of one’s own on behalf of humanity - Fuller hoped to be an example of what the cosmopolitan approach could bring to Americans. Her travel brought her a field in which she could most be herself, along with an interested audience and a circle of high-profile, internationally-engaged friends. The success of Fuller’s project was not immediate; she had to work at adjusting to a foreign culture and grow into the practice of cosmopolitanism. Thus via the dispatches, “Free Hope’s” evolution from philosophical observer to cosmopolitan practitioner can be traced over time.

The Dispatches were composed throughout Fuller’s stay in Europe. As exemplified above, they are most remarked upon for their description of the Roman revolution of 1848 – and, indeed, that was a critical time for Fuller, and the one about which she wrote a full-length book – but they begin well over a year earlier, when Fuller crossed the Atlantic and began her sojourn in Europe

more conventionally, as a tourist-- albeit a progressive and reform-minded one. She arrived in England in late summer of 1846 with friends Marcus and Rebecca Spring and their young son; the Springs paid her travel expenses in exchange for her service as a companion and tutor. Even though she experienced difficulties receiving payment, her contract with the *Tribune* would enable her eventually to leave the Springs to pursue her own agenda, making the transition from tourist to expatriate.

The early dispatches resemble other nineteenth-century travel writing in subject, form, and tone. She begins by noting how it has been difficult to find time to write during her first “days of wonder in England” (39) then makes her comments on the transatlantic passage, which had been remarkably smooth and of record-breaking speed. She duly offers her advice to those planning on making the passage themselves and her observations on her fellow passengers; so begin travel chronicles of the time and Fuller’s is no exception. Quickly follow the requisite comments on entering a land “under an aristocratical Government” (40). Fuller “confirms” certain oft-mentioned cultural differences without making the judgments that might result, as when she notes the port does appear “slower” than but is not “less truly active” and indeed is likely more efficient than its American counterpart (41).

Soon, though, the tone shifts. The Springs’ tour, while not overly adventurous, is not a conventional one; their interests in social reform lead them to tour warehouses, schools, and laundries almost as soon as they are through customs. Among the first things Fuller looks for and reports are signs of an American literary presence, and she finds it: she is proud to report that the *Dial* is valued, and American publications in general not difficult to find (43). She finds this welcome evidence that the British are proponents of international exchange; the voices of the “calumniators,” as she suspected, are not representative. Like Cooper, Fuller was rankled by the careless reporting of British travelers in America. She gets to demonstrate her own ability not to mistake exceptional occurrences for the rule when she finds two hotels in Manchester without bath

facilities, though such were present in hospitals. “Luckily I did not generalize quite as rapidly as travelers in America usually do, and put in the note book—‘*Mem*: None but the sick ever bathe in England;’ for in the next establishment[...] I found the plentiful provision” (49). Fuller consistently reacts with such calm to the mishaps of travel; she points it out to model the cosmopolitan stance she wishes all tourists would take. The jibe at the British is quickly over, and here as elsewhere, she speaks admiringly but not fawningly of Europeans. She is as willing as other American tourists to poke fun at the British, but her tone is friendly; she realizes caricature is caricature, and does not forget to give her own country a turn as target of her wit. Having left England, she remembers “John Bull, with his coal-smoke, hands in pockets, except when extended for ungracious demand of the perpetual half-crown [...] John, seen on that side, is certainly the most churlish of clowns, and the most clownish of churls. But then there are so many other sides! (87).” National stereotypes do not arise from the ether, and there is often a grain of truth in exaggerated caricatures. But Fuller recognizes the more important truth: the easily-observed habits that can inspire such characterizations can be smoke screens, obscuring deeper insights behind their apparent ordinariness.

Writing from Paris of her experience in London, Fuller is confirmed in her philosophy of “Free Hope.” She was there out of season, a circumstance that tends to trouble American tourists. Still, she “found that, with my way of viewing things, it would be to me an inexhaustible studio, and that if life were only enough, I would live here for years in some obscure corner, from which I could issue forth day by day to watch unobserved the vast streams of life” (88). The conditional here, though, indicates that living as Free Hope is still a fantasy for Fuller: she is bound by real-life obligations. She doesn’t have a corner, nor the means to inhabit one for any length of time. She knows, though, that she has a lot to learn, and that she has the ability to observe what others would miss. Absent the spectacle that normally attracts American tourists in Paris, she has no complaint, as the life of Paris goes on and that is what she wishes to see. As she gets to know Paris, she

maintains this simultaneously humble and confident stance. Her encounter with the guard at the Sorbonne shows her that France has not rid itself of the same “barbarism” of female exclusion that she faced in Cambridge, and she finds more problems of timing, as many of the most highly-esteemed lecturers are not speaking. She decides not to spend time in hearing those that are open to her, but it is a pragmatic decision: “for me, as stranger and Columbian ignoramus, I know they would have many a kernel worth disengaging from the husks, if strength and time were more abundant” (109).

When Fuller’s party reaches Italy, the pace slows a bit. After a harrowing passage from Marseilles, exacerbated by disappointing weather, Fuller succumbs to uncomfortable circumstances and as a result does not “find” Italy until a week has passed and the sun comes out (129). Then, for a while, she lives in her romantic fantasy of Italy, the Italy she finds “all familiar” (130) and calls her own [12]. She passes quickly through a list of must-see tourist destinations – Capri, Vesuvius, Sorrento, Naples – and lets herself be carried away (from dispatch writing as from on-the-ground cultural exploration) by the enchanting and storied landscapes. Fuller shows here that she can be an enthusiastic tourist; even “Free Hope” can, given the opportunity, enjoy a good whirl through gorgeous scenery. Though pleasant, such tourist activities are not Fuller’s mission, and in naming the experience “her” Italy, she acknowledges that she has not experienced Italy’s Italy. Fuller takes a dip in shallow tourist waters, and enjoys the passive delights they offer, but she swims in deeper streams. That she details the moves she makes to get there reveals her hope that any of her American readers could do the same.

Fittingly, the description of this exhilarating treat is bare and brief; the romance of Italian geography has been praised before in accounts innumerable, and though she is gratified to have seen it, it is not what Fuller is after. Italy had long been a fascination of hers, and finding it as she bears a stricture to report her findings to the public brings mixed emotions. She cannot abandon herself to her Italian experience as she takes her responsibility to report upon it seriously, and the

task of translating Italy in a way that is both useful for her American audience and up to her own standards is onerous.

There is very little that I can like to write about Italy. Italy is beautiful, worthy to be loved and embraced, not talked about. Yet I remember well that when afar I liked to read what was written about her; now all thought of it is very tedious.

The traveler passing along the beaten track, vetturinoed from inn to inn, ciceroned from gallery to gallery, thrown, through indolence, want of tact, or ignorance of the language, too much into the society of his compatriots, sees the least possible of the country; fortunately, it is impossible to avoid seeing a great deal. The great features of the past pursue and fill the eye.

Yet I find that it is quite out of the question to know Italy; to say anything of her that is full and sweet, so as to convey any idea of her spirit, without long residence, and residence in the districts untouched by the scorch and dust of foreign invasion (the invasion of the diletanti I mean,) and without an intimacy of feeling, and abandonment to the spirit of the place. (131-2)

Initially, like the tourists she describes above, Fuller is swept away by Italy's offerings. But she knows that the tourist experience is about the tourist, rather than the place toured; she realizes, uncomfortably, that her own reactions are defining her experience. Her list of things necessary for a traveler to understand Italy (time away from the popular tourist sites, familiarity with locals and their language) foretells the path she takes there. She remains longer than her tourist companions, she lives with and forms close bonds with Italians, and, in her activities with the Roman revolutionaries, she could be said to abandon herself to the spirit of the place.

In her first month in Italy, Fuller continued to write on subjects not foreign to readers of American travel literature: art, landscapes, and famous American expatriates. But signs of her future immersion and cosmopolitan agenda emerged. She praised the American consul at Venice

as, with his tact, education and skill in languages, “fitted to understand and act in foreign society as few Americans are” (144). The need for a fit American ambassador was increasingly a theme in Fuller’s dispatches as she became more and more immersed in Italian life and better understood the lost opportunities and detrimental consequences that arise from ineffective, culturally insensitive diplomacy.

Nearly five months later, at the end of July, 1847, the Spring family unexpectedly returned to the United States, leaving Fuller alone in Venice. They urged Fuller to accompany them, (and Emerson urged her to join him in England) but firmly set on further exploration, she did not consider it. She continued to travel, visiting Milan, the Italian lakes, Parma, and Florence on her own. In Venice, she hired an Italian servant to accompany her, but let him go just before she reached Rome, finding his services expensive and herself well enough adjusted to Italian ways to make arrangements for herself (Van Mehren 268). In October, she found rooms to let and settled in to winter in Rome. By this time, Fuller had met several independent and formidable women, and been encouraged by their success to find her own way [13]. She was content to throw off the tourist role, knowing that she would better get to know Italy – which was under foreign control – if she lived as the locals did (269). As she did so, she grew more and more aware of and involved with Rome's tumultuous politics.

At the same time, she was growing more involved with one particular Roman. Fuller's choice of a partner reflects her cosmopolitan willingness to embrace the foreign. Fuller had met Giovanni Angelo Ossoli wandering around St. Peter's soon after her first arrival in Rome in the spring of 1847. Ossoli was the youngest son of a minor aristocratic family loyal to the papal authority, who had only a casual education, did not speak English, and lived with his invalid father (Von Mehren 257). The details of their relationship and marriage remain somewhat clouded, but it is clear that the two began spending time together almost immediately. While Fuller did not share the relationship with her friends at home until much later, she must have cited it in a letter to

Mickiewicz, detailing her thoughts in deciding whether or not to stay in Europe (and in Italy), as he wrote in a letter of April 26 that she should not leave “the little Italian she met in the Church” (qtd 260). Mickiewicz (who was, like Ossoli, a Catholic) would later be Fuller's choice of godfather for her son. Fuller informed her family and friends of her marriage (and child) only when she knew she had to return home with her new family. She was aware that she would face difficulties with a Catholic, Italian-speaking husband in New England. Emerson, in an about-face from all his previous advice, even urged her to remain in Europe (329). The reaction of her American friends to her relationship was, to Fuller, one more mark of her countrymen's disappointing close-mindedness. Ossoli's family, who were also kept in the dark about the relationship until the last moment, disapproved on both economic and political grounds (328).

Fuller's transition from tourist to expatriate and then to revolutionary is traceable in her dispatches, which focused less and less on sightseeing and art as Fuller grew occupied with current events in Rome. Even though life in Rome was somewhat chaotic, Fuller's commitment to stay there had freed her from the hectic day-to-day chores of being a tourist and she felt at liberty. The new stability of her life allowed her to compare the experience of living in a foreign country to that of being a tourist there. Of the difference between her present situation in Rome and her first experience with the Springs, in the same city a few months prior, she writes:

Then I was here, like travelers in general, expecting to be driven away in a short time. Like others, I went through the painful process of sight-seeing, so unnatural everywhere, so counter to the healthful methods and true life of the mind. You rise in the morning knowing there are around you a great number of objects worth knowing, which you may never have a chance to see again. You go every day, in all moods, under all circumstances; you feel, probably, in seeing them, the inadequacy of your preparation for understanding or duly receiving them; this consciousness would be most valuable if you had time to think and study, being the natural way in which the mind is lured to cure its defects—but you have no

time, you are always wearied, body and mind, confused, dissipated, sad....(168)

Fuller was not anti-tourist. She simply insistently acknowledged the trouble with tourism, even when the tourist has the best of intentions: the tourist agenda does not leave time for the efforts that cross-cultural engagement requires. That task can be done but minimally if at all, and so tourists who travel with the hope of meaningfully experiencing the foreign are frustrated.

In addition to her growing insights on tourism and intercultural learning, the dispatches continue to feature Fuller's perspective on her own country, and specifically on the way her country looks from her foreign vantage point. With time to "think and study," Fuller gains a new understanding of Americans and does not hesitate to share what she discovers, positive and negative. Perhaps most important, Fuller's close affiliation with luminaries like Mazzini and Mickiewicz, involved in hands-on struggles for their homelands, leads her to examine her own relationship to her country. What does it mean that she is an American? To her foreign friends, that identity stands for the ideals of freedom, and for the progress of humanity. Mickiewicz, in particular, articulated his belief that she, as a liberated American woman, represented a hope for the universal growth of liberal ideals. Always a thoughtful and analytic observer of her own society, she knows well that her own behavior is not typical of her fellow Americans and that she is more attuned to the real character of Americans than her European friends. She begins to explain her hope that Americans will embrace a more cosmopolitan culture in the dispatches by showing Americans how they look from abroad.

Initially, her opinions center on traveling Americans. Certainly, they face the obstacles, detailed above, that all tourists face, but their response is colored by American culture. The American "character" she penned for her New Year's dispatch for 1848 is well known for its identification of "three species" of Americans. Travel brings the character of each to light. "There is a gradual clearing-up on many points, and many baseless notions and crude fancies are dropped" (162). The first and most easily dismissed "species" – "parasites of a bygone period" - she labels

“servile;” these familiar, shopping-minded souls are Cooper’s hajjis, who travel to “win importance at home...among those less traveled and as uninformed as himself.” Fuller does not dwell on this group; she realizes they are unlikely to change and places her hope for an enlightened American culture with another group: the Thinking Americans.

These “can only become more American” in Europe. Chevigny delineated Fuller’s discovery of her own American identity in Europe, and here, Fuller asserts that her case is not unusual. This American is, (and all Americans should be) essentially, cosmopolitan. “He is anxious to gather and carry back with him all that will bear a new climate and new culture.[....] He wishes to give them a fair trial in his new world” (163). Americanness should impart a facility to learn from difference, to glean the best to bring back to his homeland for the good of the world. The “thinkers” do not “become more American” by resisting foreign influences. Rather, the knowledge they gain from foreign experience empowers them to act for the U.S..

Between parasite and thinker comes “the conceited American, instinctively bristling and proud of—he knows not what.” Perhaps most perfectly caricatured by the narrator of Twain’s Innocents Abroad, this is the mine-is-the-best-country-in-the- world American, to whom foreign ways are simply silly and art or achievement, if unattainable, unfamiliar, or uninteresting to him, “humbug.” Without the healthy attitude of the thinkers but also the insulating self-centeredness of the servile, he is a dangerous type. This is the American that most troubles Fuller, for she draws a line between his “conceited” attitude and real problems faced by the United States domestically and abroad. The attitude leads Europeans exposed to it in the Americans they encounter to believe the U. S. to be a nation of uninformed navel-gazers, but Fuller’s concern is not limited to the embarrassment they cause for more cosmopolitan travelers such as herself; she fears they also have a negative impact on the development of American culture. The idea of American artistic originality, embraced by the many of Fuller’s transcendentalist friends, had an element of the attitude she describes here as “conceited;” if “throwing off courtly muses” was to include ignoring

the world cultural heritage and disregarding the world of contemporary foreigners, Fuller wanted none of it. She was a great admirer of American artists who lived and studied abroad and worked throughout her career to educate Americans at home on European literature and art. Defending such artists' painting of Italian landscapes, she chides "Nature wears a different face in Italy than she does in America. Do you not want to see her Italian face, it is very glorious! We thought it was the aim of art to reproduce all forms of Nature" (186). When American exceptionalism is embraced by "conceited" Americans, their ignorance grows.

Via the reach of their increasingly-powerful government, which imposes itself more and more in international affairs, conceited Americans not only bring down their national culture but also, by neglect or by heavy-handedness, do damage abroad. This is the attitude of some American tourists she had noticed and despaired of in a previous dispatch, writing that they travel "in body...they do not travel in mind—absorbed at home by the lust for gain, the love of show, abroad they see only the equipages, the fine clothes, the food—they have no heart for the idea, for the destiny of our own great nation: how can they feel the spirit that is struggling now in this and others of Europe?" (154). Absence of cosmopolitanism degrades American culture, which in turn degrades international relations and humanity as a whole. Fuller's discussion of the American "species" is followed by a New Year's reflection on the relationship of individuals, and nations, to the world, and specifically, the developing character of the U.S.. Beginning with a catalog that calls to mind Cooper's panoramic introduction to "Point de Bateaux" - "A new world, a new chance, with oceans to wall in the new thought from the old!" – Fuller's tone changes abruptly as she laments how the American "Eagle" now too often resembles a "vulture" (164).

Thou wert to be the advance-guard of humanity, the herald of all Progress; how often hast thou betrayed this high commission! [...] we must stammer and blush when we speak of many things [...] I listen to the same arguments against the emancipation of Italy, that are used against the emancipation of blacks; the same arguments in favor of the spoliation of

Poland as for the conquest of Mexico. I find the cause of tyranny and wrong everywhere the same—and lo! my Country the darkest offender, because with the least excuse, foresworn to the high calling with which she was called,—no champion of the rights of men, but a robber and a jailer; the scourge hid behind her banner; her eyes fixed, not on the stars, but on the possessions of other men. (165)

Fuller connects individual culture with national policy. Americans' collective conceitedness leads not only to American neglect of movements for democracy abroad, but also to the disregard of principle in the quest for national gain. Fuller was embittered by the lack of foreign support for the Roman revolution; the refusal of the United States to acknowledge the republic, let alone send material support followed more decisively negative reactions from France and Germany [14]. Americans who do not learn about the culture of other countries see too little about their own; trumpeting their freedom and high ideals, they trample on the rights and lives of others. Blinded by self-interested ends, the U.S. employs means that betray its principles. The inability (or the refusal) to understand foreign ways leads to hypocrisy. Fuller, with her thorough immersion in Italian society and concern with the concerns of the people living and striving around her, consistently worked to avoid that self-centered stance. Travelers must never forget that the lands in which they were traveling were peopled by human beings as complex and engaged as any. Around six months earlier – as she shifted firmly from traveler from expatriate, and as the events of the Revolution were escalating – Fuller decided that the full-length book she had been planning would be a history of the events she was witnessing in Europe rather than a travel book (Capper 2:375).

After the “sad but glorious” (285) end of the Revolution, Fuller was more specific in her connection of the American failure to understand foreign events and to what she believed to be destructive foreign policies. The lack of open engagement with the world meant that the better impulses of the United States were subsumed by greed for power, and the ideals of the founders betrayed. Values Americans identified as “American” were now more activated in the liberal

movements in Europe than in the United States.

In Europe, amid the teachings of adversity a nobler spirit is struggling—a spirit which cheers and animates mine. I hear earnest words of pure faith and brotherhood. This is what makes *my* America. [...] it is not making a President out of the Mexican War that would make me wish to come back. Here things are before my eyes worth recording, and, if I cannot help this work, I would gladly be its historian. (230)

Fuller wished that as an American she could be a champion of the cause of European republicanism, a heroic foreigner who, à la Lafayette, could bring hope to a nation struggling to be born. Though not backed by the military power both she and her Italian friends might have wished the United States could impart, she was such a champion, ideally placed to do the work of educating her countrymen, and she set herself to the task. The “adversity” faced by the European revolutions – enforced by armies of monarchical powers – was the same that had to be defeated by the American revolution. By the 1840s, the United States was no longer a nation whose citizens had a part in, could recall, or were even alive for its inception. As a witness to and even participant in the Italian revolution, Fuller reconnected with this already-bygone experience of the American heritage. She wrote a book fully describing the “Truth” of what happened in Rome; she “bought [her] right” to its “over-rich materials” by “much sympathetic suffering” (237). Her hope was that that “sympathetic suffering” gave her the authority not only to chronicle the events she lived through there, but also, in so doing, to remind Americans of their responsibility to the world.

First of all, Fuller urged the United States to get its Department of State in order. Diplomats should hold the cosmopolitan credentials that should be necessary to do their jobs. “Pray send here a good ambassador,” she writes,

one that has experience of foreign life, that he may act with good judgment; and, if possible, a man that has knowledge and views which extend beyond the cause of party politics in the United States; a man of unity in principles, but capable of understanding

variety in forms. (245)

American ambassadors should be cosmopolitan not only because of the duties of their position, but because they are representatives of American democracy, and Fuller feels that democracies should be cosmopolitan places. Cosmopolitanism would impart to the U.S. a strength that could be as potent as but far more noble and just than the military power it was (already) favoring. An appropriately cosmopolitan ambassador would be able to understand what was really happening in the country he was serving, to see through differences in “form” to the rich human potential such differences could otherwise obscure. Since one is more likely to understand once understood, cooperation and mutually beneficial exchange would be more likely to follow such sympathetic diplomacy. Just as she embraced the multiculturalism she saw in the American territories or the streets of New York, she celebrated the increase in cultural diversity that followed the Roman revolution, when foreign plays were introduced in the city (279).

As the revolution unfolds and is gradually quelled by Austrian and French forces, Fuller reports the turn of events briefly, noting her emotional upset, and her plans to more fully describe the rise and fall of the movement in her book. Fuller's wish was to remain in Italy, but her circumstances made her return to the U.S. seem unavoidable. She failed to arrange for publication of her book from Italy, where she also faced dangers related to her revolutionary activities; by 1849, Ossoli, too, had to avoid persecution by Papal authorities (Capper 462). She booked a transatlantic passage for the early summer of 1850. Her last months in Italy were spent with her husband and small son. While they never abandon the subject of the failed revolution and its aftermath, her final dispatches return to the mode of travel-writing as Fuller more frequently shares advice for Americans wishing to experience life in Italy. Her plans made and her activist friends in Rome dispersed, she returns as she can to a tourist agenda, as if to distract herself from her sadness at the failure of the revolution, discontent at having to leave early, and apprehension at the reception she would get from American friends at home. Written at the end of nearly four years

abroad, the advice differs little in theme from the “Free Hope” philosophy; the addition of practical details mark Fuller’s hard-won knowledge of how to make the cosmopolitan lifestyle work as an expatriate traveler.

Fuller is frustrated that she could not raise even the small amount of money she would need to stay; her Italian husband, whose family did not support his revolutionary activities or alliance with an American, was similarly unable to earn a living. “One who keeps still in Italy, and lives as the people do,” she writes, “may really have much simple luxury for very little money; though both travel and, to the inexperienced foreigner, life in the cities are expensive” (237). Without even that “very little money,” however, her knowledge and experience do her no good. Compounding her frustration are wealthier Americans who squander their opportunities (and their resources) abroad. She finds that the American tourists she encounters are ignorant not only of current events but of most aspects of Italian culture. For one, they move too quickly. “It is said you cannot thoroughly know anything till you have both summered and wintered it; but more than one Summer and Winter of experience seems to be needed for Rome” (247). Certain cultural insights must be lived to be understood. Even worse, though, is the lack on the part of most tourists of any real desire to understand the foreignness they encounter. Such travelers had better stay home. In one episode she describes in a dispatch, she watches a popular demonstration with an American friend who had been in Rome for months. She’d thought he was a kindred spirit, but he sees the heroic Civic Guard as “only soldiers” and is therefore unimpressed with their efforts—a disappointing and unimaginable failure in Fuller’s view.

Thus it is that the American, on many points, becomes more ignorant for coming abroad, because he attaches some value to his crude impressions and frequent blunders. It is not thus that any seed-corn can be gathered from foreign gardens. Without modest scrutiny, patient study and observation, he spends his money and goes home with a new coat perhaps, but a mind befooled rather than instructed. It is necessary to speak the languages

of these countries and know personally some of their inhabitants in order to form any accurate impressions. (258).

Fuller believes the book she has written about modern Italy to be as much a means for the cosmopolitan education of her countrymen as for her own financial salvation. In all her work, though, Fuller urged her countrymen to consider carefully the ways in which they acted in the world. Fuller's last manuscript has never been read, as it was lost in the shipwreck off Long Island that tragically drowned her and her family. Her career thus had an abrupt end, but it is clear that she had intended to continue doing what she could, in her writing, to help Americans to empathize with people from other places and cultures. She was already a model traveler, encouraging in her dispatches the exploration of unfamiliar people as well as places. She hoped that Americans could become people known for their cosmopolitan characteristics – as people who “beat with the living heart of the world.”

When Fuller was making her journey around the Great Lakes in 1843, she had given a lot of thought to the settlers who were, in their way, building their own world. They were a diverse crew, of varying cultural and economic backgrounds, and Fuller tries to determine what kind of person is most likely not only to survive but also to succeed in building the society that would be American and so shape American culture. Zeroing in on the challenges of the American settler – that is, the emigrant from the east coast, whom Fuller imagines as an educated and idealistic “enthusiast” - she observes that the new arrival is in for a rude awakening. Far from the imagined idyll of nature and a birthing civilization, he finds “the vulgarity of a mob...a deserted solitude” (SoL 75). The settler's experience here mirrors that of the new traveler, the cosmopolitan yet to be made. The new foreignness is disorienting and impenetrable. He does not fit in; he can not be at ease. “But let him come sufficiently armed” Fuller continues, “with patience to learn the new spells which the new dragons require [...]he will not be finally disappointed of the promised

treasure.” “Patience to learn the new spells” is, to Fuller, a defining cosmopolitan characteristic. In her subsequent writing and travels, she sought to teach Americans the “new spells” they would need to engage the world successfully. The “golden rule” is part and parcel of cosmopolitanism: one should approach foreigners as one would like to be approached by them. The book ends with a similar dictum: “Read me as you would be read” (156). The “speaker” in this case is the book itself, but that book, here, stands in for all travel writing, all of Fuller's work and, by extension, cosmopolitans of her ilk. The philosophy that respect for others fosters personal growth permeated Fuller's approach to travel and to citizenship. Careful “reading” is the first step to productive cosmopolitanism—it starts on a personal level then extends outward.

Margaret Fuller's journey from curious traveler to travel writer to revolutionary set her apart as an American ahead of her time, an exceptionally cosmopolitan citizen interested in serving her country as best she could. Her patriotic cosmopolitanism led her, via her quest for self-improvement, to embark upon enriching travel experiences, and enabled her to share those with her readers, encouraging them to undertake their own cross-cultural forays. Her ideals permeated her life fully, influencing her personal life as well as her political activities; she felt, as an American, she could not act otherwise. In her first significant travel experience, which exposed her to immigrant settlers and Indian communities, she discovered her interest in learning about and forming relationships with groups of people who were different from her, displaying not only cosmopolitan curiosity but cosmopolitan willingness to put herself forward into the unknown. In particular, she learned a lesson the historical failure of her country to understand cultural difference from the Indians. While she could not imagine a way to undo the unforgivable damage done to the decimated Indians, she certainly remembered that lesson when she encountered Italians and Poles struggling against foreign oppressors in Europe. Her years of study of foreign language and arts had left her better prepared to make meaningful connections there. Whether her explorations found her reviewing texts from New York, pounding corn alongside Indian women (Capper 130), or

hiding from cannon fire while supervising the care of wounded fighters in a Roman field hospital, she practiced a cosmopolitanism that was its own kind of revolution.

Notes

1 The exceptional formal education Fuller's father gave his daughter will be discussed later in this chapter. As a young woman, Fuller joined social and intellectual circles that have become well-known for their philosophical, social, and artistic ideas, and she cultivated relationships with leading thinkers throughout her life.

2 George Ticknor held a professorship at Harvard from 1817-1835, when his post was filled by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He was a trustee of the Boston Athenaeum, worked for the founding of the Boston Public Library, and was, in general, a “lion” of social and cultural life in Boston. For more on his life and writings, see David B. Tyack's George Ticknor and the Boston Brahmins (1967). For his accomplishments at Harvard and his development of the curriculum there, see the chapter on “The Modern Languages” in The Development of Harvard University 1869-1929, (1930) edited by Samuel Eliot Morrison.

3 As discussed in the previous chapter, Cooper dealt with Americans touring Europe most thoroughly in his novel Home as Found (1838). In the New York society to which Cooper's Europhilic but staunchly American protagonists return, Americans who have toured Europe are termed “hajjis” for having made the trip. Hajjis are smugly satisfied that their European tours – often the most superficial of “cultural experiences” - render them superior to their domestically-bound compatriots, who do tend to hold them in esteem. The hajjis' dissemination of misinformation about Europe is one of the primary sources of humor in the novel. The hajjis as a group are most ably represented in the character of Aristobalus Dodge, a self-satisfied “Democrat” whose pontifications about European life as “Active Inquirer” entertain as much as they embarrass the more culturally aware but less attention-seeking Effinghams.

4 The shape of Summer on the Lakes merits a larger discussion than fits in this chapter. The form of the narrative can feel distractingly eclectic; it meanders from style to style and subject to subject, and not always in a way that reflects the physical journey the book is ostensibly describing. As Stowe mentions, this is not unusual in nineteenth-century travel writing, but Fuller's case, particularly in the context of her career, seems more self-conscious and purposeful.

 In form, Summer on the Lakes is something like encyclopedic in nature. In the definition offered by Edward Mendelson, “encyclopedic narratives” meet the following formal and extratextual criteria: they catalog a range of literary styles and narrative forms, they appear during periods of cultural turmoil, they represent the current state of knowledge, and they seek to express a culture’s sense of its own identity. SoL is *not* encyclopedic: in size (which Mendelson notes must be significant); in scope, as the texts Mendelson specifies (*Moby-Dick*, *Don Quixote*, *Ulysses* and just a few others); or, obviously, in singularity—the most important stipulation. Encyclopedic narrative is not merely a formal descriptor but a historically-significant role: each age of any one culture can have but one. For Fuller’s era, that position as literary monument is held without a doubt by Melville’s work. But the fact that Fuller’s book is marked by so many encyclopedic characteristics – albeit in miniature – demonstrates that she had her pulse on something critical in her culture. Furthermore, encyclopedias inherently act to globalize cultural identity, in that they are defining and presenting it to the world. To dabble in encyclopedia is an act of simultaneous exploration and introspection--as, of course, is travel. Stepping back, then, one sees that, in its inclusion of multiple genres and attempts to express range and difference, travel-writing, particularly as Fuller embraces it, is a cosmopolitan form.

5 Among the strongest examples of travel writers less sensitive to this need for “courtesy” was the infamous (to Americans) Fanny Trollope, whose Domestic Manners of the Americans (1832) was full of entertaining gossip from the homes Trollope witnessed during her travels. The

usually diplomatic Fuller had strong feelings about the quality of Trollope's work. In a dispatch from Italy, she wrote "Can any thing be more sadly expressive of times out of joint than the fact that Mrs. Trollope is a resident....to trail her slime over the fruit of Italy" (SBG 171).

6 For more on Slotkin, see the discussion in the previous chapter.

7 Margaret Fuller's cosmopolitanism was greatly influenced by the transcendentalist ideas of Emerson and the rest of her colleagues from Hedge's Club. Transcendentalism aimed, in part, at improving human society by recuperating and empowering the individual. Fuller's chosen means of self-culture, however, were not as exclusively introspective as the other transcendentalists'. Her cosmopolitanism was the most important gift she offered her fellow thinkers, and one they did not get from many other sources.

8 For Pratt's discussion of this trope in Victorian travel writing, see her Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (New York: Routledge, 1992), p 201-206.

9 From an early age, Fuller was trained to learn from her mistakes, intellectual and social alike, which were frequently pointed out to her by parents, relatives, and friends. Many of these come from seemingly conflicting demands that she meet rigorous standards in both intellectual attainment and feminine comportment. Fuller's journals and letters as well as accounts by those who knew her provide ample evidence of her struggles to improve herself. Conflict arose not infrequently from her desire to seek her own standard and her need to fit into her community. For more on Fuller's blunderings in childhood, adolescence, and beyond, see Von Mehren.

10 That travel can lead to compromised health was hardly less true in the nineteenth century than it is today. Fuller, though hardly sickly, suffered headaches and depressive symptoms throughout her life, and these unsurprisingly flared up on occasion while she traveled. In Paris, she suffered from a toothache so severe she became an early user of anesthetic to have it remedied, and in Italy, she experienced pregnancy and childbirth. The latter necessitated her leaving Rome; pragmatically, she was not ready for the American expatriate community to know of her liaison with an Italian.

11 Mickiewicz grew close to Fuller after they met in Paris. Their friendship continued; he lived with her for a while during the Roman Revolution (he came in support of Mazzini) and was Fuller's choice to be her son's godfather. Mickiewicz was in exile from his native Poland, and connected the rise of democracies around the world with Poland's liberation. In Italy, he argued with the Papal forces and was forced to flee after the revolution's end. He would die in 1855 organizing a Polish legions in Istanbul.

 In 1819, the young Mickiewicz began an epic poem on American called “The Potato.” In the existing segments, the omniscient ancient gods debate whether to sink Columbus's ships (thereby preventing the “discovery” of the new world). On the “pro” side is the heavy weight of the death and suffering the arrival of whites brings to the Native Americans; on the “con,” the wealth to be acquired from transatlantic trade, and the freedoms embodied in the founding of the United States. The scale is considered balanced, and only when the potato (which would save many lives in Europe) is mentioned as a benefit of contact between old and new worlds is Columbus allowed to proceed. The message of the fragment is, in part, that liberty, like the potato, can grow anywhere. For more on Manfred Kridl's “Mickiewicz and the American Potato” in Adam Mickiewicz Poet of Poland. (Manfred Kridl, ed.. New York, Columbia UP, 1951.)

 For a detailed account of the relationship between Mickiewicz and Fuller, see Leopold

Wellisz, The Friendship of Margaret Fuller D'Ossoli and Adam Mickiewicz (New York, Polish Book Importing Co., 1947).

12 The combination of a legacy of cultural production and a favorable climate lent Italy great appeal to Americans, who often dreamed of Italy even when a journey there was not a possibility. Nineteenth-century American travelers routinely identified Italy as a favorite destination and idealized the luxury of life there. In his The Fortunate Pilgrims: Americans in Italy 1800-1860, Paul R. Baker notes a mid-nineteenth century shift from exploration to “romanticization,” wherein American visitors prepared by reading earlier travel accounts brought with them “inherited stock impressions” that influenced their perceptions of modern Italy (4). Such travelers “no longer felt a strong need to learn about foreign society in order to report home their findings [...] Italy became for them more exclusively a land of the past, a graveyard of ruined monuments and ancient tombs. Interest in contemporary life declined, and significant personal contacts with individual Italians became fewer” (4). After the American Civil War, as modernization and current events (like the revolution to which Margaret Fuller devoted her attention and energies) made such focus on the archaic and picturesque paths so frequently visited unfulfilling, a later new generation of tourists Baker terms “exotics” sought to recapture the romance of Italy by visiting towns off the beaten path that had no entries in available guidebooks, but were even less interested in contemporary life there (5).

Americans, of course, did not invent the fascination with or romanticization of Italy. European travelers in the eighteenth century had gone to Italy for similar reasons and responded to the country in similar ways. Famous travelers who produced accounts that were widely read and influential included Lady Knight, Chateaubriand, Goethe, and Germaine de Stael, whose work inspired the next generation travelers, and so on. For more on this tradition, see Robert Casillo's The Empire of Stereotypes (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006) and Jeremy Black's Italy and

the Grand Tour (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). For more on the responses of nineteenth-century Americans to Italy, see for example Annamaria F. Elsdon's Roman Fever: Domesticity and Nationalism in 19th Century American Women's Writing (Cleveland: Ohio State University Press, 2004) or Hawthorne's novel The Marble Faun, which presents his imagination of Fuller's experience.

13 Georges Sand in France and Constanza Arconati-Visconti in Italy provided Fuller with models for female leadership in progressive movements. They encouraged her directly and by their independent actions for social change.

14 For more on the State Department's (lack of) response to the Italian revolution, see SBC, 276.

Conclusion

We should meet each morning, as from foreign countries, and spending the day together, should depart at night, as into foreign countries (Emerson 150).

Ralph Waldo Emerson is best known for his philosophical, even metaphysical writings, in which he exhorts his readers to move beyond quotidian existence into headier realms. But he was not averse to offering slightly more practical advice, suitable for those instances when one must interact with the rest of one's kind. The example above, from "Manners" (1844), speaks both to transcendental philosophy and the wider, American context in which it developed, and serves as a fitting introduction to my examination of culture and intercultural exchanges in this project. Emerson's emphasis is on the individual, who is a nation unto him- or herself; therefore all are foreign to one another. Culture, in this view, is an individual property, and so every human interaction is "cross-cultural." At the end of the day, when individuals part, the exchange ceases, and each goes back to his own vast and personal state, presumably unaffected by the experience of the day—still foreign to one another. The cultivation of the individual trumps any claims of community or recognition of commonality. This is an intriguing and sensitive philosophy for conceptualizing interpersonal relationships and may be well and good when one is dealing only with one's circle of friends, who on the whole, share one's goals, aspirations, and lifestyle—who have read the same books, inhabited the same places, and share the same confidence in their place in the world. What happens, though, if one encounters an actual foreigner, or ventures into an actual foreign country? In theory, Emerson's rule could be put into practice—but how much greater the work needed to find common ground on which to "spend the day."

"Manners" begins with a discussion of culture. "Half the world [...] knows not how the other half live" (131). The opening paragraph refers to four different cultures, native to the Pacific

islands and Africa. Each is summed up in a few words, and a behavioral characteristic or two allowed to signify their cultural identity: the Feejee islanders “are said to eat their own wives and children;” the language of the “rock-Tiboos” “is compared by their neighbors to the shrieking of bats.” These, without question, are “foreign countries,” and all are described via hearsay in the strict absence of direct observation. These cultures are obviously inferior to the writer’s own:

the salt, the dates, the ivory, and the gold, for which these horrible regions are visited, find their way into countries, where the purchaser and consumer can hardly be ranked in one race with these cannibals and man-stealers; countries where man serves himself with metals, wood, stone, glass, gum, cotton, silk, and wool; honors himself with architecture; writes laws, and contrives to execute his will through the hands of many nations; and, especially, establishes a select society, running through all the countries of intelligent men, a self-constituted aristocracy, or fraternity of the best, which, without written law or exact usage of any kind, perpetuates itself, colonizes every new-planted island, and adopts and makes its own whatever personal beauty or extraordinary native endowment anywhere appears. (132)

Encounter, here, is something that is endured only for profit. In this purely imperialist description, the inhabitants of the “horrible regions” are to be colonized as the superior culture “perpetuates itself.” Emerson uses these sensationalized accounts of foreign cultures to set the stage for the central theme of his essay, which is not “Manners” in general but rather the importance and characteristics of “gentlemen.” The gentlemanly members of this “fraternity of the best” are the masters of the universe, and so can bend it and its lesser inhabitants to their will; “gentlemen” are not only different from but also clearly superior to non-gentlemen. Still, Emerson’s ideal resembles a cosmopolitan in some aspects: he is above fashion, he can get along in a variety of settings, he has the ability to make others comfortable regardless of who they are. He is also “heroic”: a “friend of Poland,” a “comforter of the runaway slave,” or, eccentrically, a planter of “shade-trees

for the second and third generation” (159). And yet, a gentleman's adherence to his self-perpetuating “unwritten laws” limits his adaptability and truncates his receptivity. A gentleman, Emerson continues,

should not go where he cannot carry his whole sphere or society with him,--not bodily, the whole circle of his friends, but atmospherically. He should preserve in a new company the same attitude of mind and reality of relation, which his daily associates draw him to, else he is shorn of his best beams, and will be an orphan in the merriest club. (145)

Gentlemen do not draw support from the company of others (unless said others are “friends”). On the contrary, Emerson insists (reversing Donne) that he “would have the island of a man inviolate” (150).

Emerson's transcendentalist belief in and devotion to self-culture and self-reliance was extreme. In “Manners” and elsewhere in his work, he stresses the importance of cultivation of a strong self from nature and the internal world, protected, for the most part, from outside influences. He seems to be constantly evaluating those he encounters as to their worthiness for his company, which is measured by their pursuit of his ideals. He would rather eat with a criminal than an “unpresentable person” because “at short distances, the senses are despotic” (152). Such a fastidious sensibility calls to mind not a seasoned traveler but the settlers who so frustrated Margaret Fuller in Wisconsin, who constantly derided the Indians' “dirt” and wondered at Fuller's interest in knowing them. Emerson did, in fact, wonder at Fuller's prolonged and deep involvement with foreigners. Like so many of his colleagues, he made more than one trip abroad. But even as his more cosmopolitan contemporaries could notice (Fuller was let down by his disinterest in foreignness; Mark Renella's description of Norton's impressions was discussed in the first chapter of this project) that he remained in many ways untouched by the experience. The purpose of his trips was recreation or self-promotion, and he traveled in company with friends to visit British authors, American expatriate artists or historic landmarks and to give lectures on his own ideas.

He admitted that his interests and his skills did not lie in foreign adventures. He recorded his feelings in English Traits, as he describes his transatlantic voyage: “I did not go very willingly. I am not a good traveller” (779). Much as Fuller encouraged him to embrace foreign ideas and authors, he did not share her enthusiasm, and his interests lay elsewhere. Emerson's fellow Concordian, Henry David Thoreau, showed the same tendency; the first line of his travel account, A Yankee in Canada, reads “I fear I have not got much to say about Canada, not having seen much; what I got by going to Canada was a cold” (3). Of course, transcendentalists, like so many of their fellow Americans, did travel; and while some, like Fuller's “servile Americans,” perhaps did so for frivolous reasons, they also went to satisfy curiosity, to expand their knowledge and experience, to feed their imaginations and to develop their skills in observation and comparison. Their accounts of their travel are often entertaining and provide insights into the performance of nineteenth-century American cultural identity.

Travel brings adventure, and Americans have, from the first, perceived themselves as adventurers. How those adventures are defined, and the consequences they bring, have always been multitudinous. While travel writing may focus on wonders of nature, descriptions of impressive ruins of antiquity, and tales of picturesque folk life, the fact is that, on this inhabited planet, travel nearly always involves entering upon the home territory of human beings. The unfamiliarity of the ways of these people – these foreigners – is a challenge all travelers must face. But of course, one need not travel to encounter the foreign. The tendency of human beings is to move about, by desire or for survival; the United States, in particular, has been a place inhabited by people with different desires and of different origins and histories. Even if that weren't the case, the determination of the U.S. to act as one of a world of nations means that it must engage with foreigners.

George Catlin, James Fenimore Cooper, and Margaret Fuller, though, advocated a far more

immersive experience of foreign engagement that would serve as a corrective to the ways Americans approached intercultural exchanges. American cosmopolitanism required travelers to step outside of themselves, to be willing to be humbled by their own ignorance, in order to gain the insights that come from going from a state of culture shock, “mute and embarrassed,” to an enlightening cultural brokerage. Only by thus being “shorn of their best beams” could ignorance be overcome. These writers were determined to get through the barriers to understanding erected, they acknowledged, by cultural difference. To learn, they had to admit what they did not know. The process was risky, but offered wonderful rewards to those who took the time and effort required to, as Fuller put it, “trust to the interpreting spirit.” The receptivity required for cosmopolitanism was to all three a trait well worth cultivating—and one that they felt should become a feature of U.S. cultural identity. Their cosmopolitanism meant taking seriously their fellow human beings, especially when those fellows were foreigners, as it was precisely such that offered the greatest opportunities to learn and grow. Where Emerson sought to “carry his whole sphere or society with him,” the cosmopolitan travelers sought to add to their “sphere” wherever they went. All three advocated a sympathetic approach to cross-cultural exchanges; Catlin's assertion that travelers must bring “feelings to meet feelings,” Fuller's desire to encounter the world's “living heart” (SoL 82), Cooper's willingness to “create new attachments” (Notions 6) that enabled a penetrating knowledge of “things less evident” (“Steamboats” 75).

Catlin realized his cosmopolitan attitude enabled productive cross-cultural exchange and worked against injustice. Cooper saw that cosmopolitanism could allow Americans to rise above petty squabbles that damaged international affairs. Both men were also well aware that cosmopolitanism was *not* a popular mindset among Americans and, in fact, suffered for their championing of its cause. As a woman ready and willing to step outside her “sphere” on many levels, Margaret Fuller learned that adopting a cosmopolitan attitude in the U.S. would be revolutionary. Too many Americans have always feared too much engagement with foreignness to

be a threat to their “self-reliance” and therefore their culture; they have also known that sympathy with foreigners might require a modification of domestic interests, and so be unwelcome.

The level of cosmopolitan engagement displayed by Fuller, Catlin, and Cooper is rare in American literary history, not only for the depth of the writers' commitment and for the amount of their cross-cultural output, but for their linkage of their art to politics—of their writing to living, breathing human beings in and outside the United States. Their responses to cultural brokerage were not only imagined or written down, but lived. Still, there is plenty more cosmopolitan material in the American literature that lends itself to productively transnational and cosmopolitan readings. Recently “discovered” writings of Indians, slaves, and other cultural subgroups provide deeper insights into the cosmopolitanism that existed in the nineteenth-century U.S.. Better known authors provide plenty of material for cosmopolitan analysis as well, of course; Peter Gibian has recently offered such a reading of Herman Melville. Certainly the relationship between Ishmael and Queequeg is an indispensable part of the American cosmopolitan canon. The *Pequod* is without question a cosmopolitan environment, and Melville's work, inspired by his own global adventures, is rife with cross-cultural engagement. The danger of neglecting cosmopolitan awareness is particularly evident in Benito Cereno: Babo has enough cross-cultural understanding to know that the American captain has none, and so the American can be easily and dangerously deceived by a manipulation of cultural performances and stereotypes. Without a doubt, the list could go on. The writings of Charles Brockden Brown, Catharin Maria Sedgwick, and many others present similarly complex fictional portrayals of cross-cultural brokerage and its impact on American identity.

There is a difference, though, between novelistic depictions of the cross-cultural adventures of heroes and captains and nonfictional travel writing, which carries (at least ostensibly) the presumption that its mainstream readers could, with the right resources and desires, do as the writer has done. Catlin surely was aware that few would follow his example in traveling to Indian lands, but still insisted that if “anyone will take the pains...to go” laying aside “prejudice and dread” and

bringing “feelings to meet feelings” (1841:1:8) they could have the same illuminating and liberating experience he does. Fuller offered advice on how to prepare for and accomplish meaningful intercultural interactions. Cooper repeatedly stressed the time and effort required to understand foreign cultures: “We are all addicted to the weakness of believing our own customs best; and it requires that we should travel much, before we are able to decide on points so nice [...] usages must be worn, like a shoe, before one can judge of a fit” (Monikins 197).

The authors discussed in this project were disappointed, overall, in the reception their ideas received in their time, but they may be heartened to know that travel writers today continue their struggle to bolster American cosmopolitanism. Convincing the American populace to make real connections with foreignness has been an ongoing struggle. Rick Steves, host of Public Television's Europe through the Back Door, who for decades has written guide books and led foreign tours for Americans, recently published a new kind of travel book. Travel as a Political Act (2009) documents the many ways that knowing Europeans, Central Americans and Middle Easterners has changed his sense of American identity and his views of the world, influencing his opinions not only on international affairs but on domestic issues like drug policy, health care, taxation and education. In his conclusion, he admits, “I like to say (naively, I know) that if every American were required to travel abroad before voting, the US would fit more comfortably into this ever-smaller planet” (199). In his introduction, he offers his suggestions for how to make the most of cosmopolitan travel, and in between, he details how experiences in disparate places have led him to new insights and formed the person he is –a proud, cosmopolitan American. The success of his career of “selling” cosmopolitan travel to the American public would surely be heartening to the antebellum writers I have discussed here.

I began this section with Emerson's suggestion that people should approach one another as if they were going “into foreign countries.” To conclude it, I share a different musing on the subject from Margaret Fuller. As revolution was brewing in Rome, she commented in the *Tribune*

that “the genuine kings of men” seem “as if nothing human could be foreign to them” (SBG 172).

Taken alongside her many dictates on proper modes of travel, as well as her calls for proper American engagement in international affairs, this is a strong statement of Fuller's ideals. There is liberty in escaping the limitations, if only briefly or in imagination, of one's own cultural prism. In a land as diverse and ostensibly as all-embracing as the United States, that should not have been hard to do, but her fellow Americans tended to “have no heart for the idea” of their own American-ness; to do so, they had to be willing to master cosmopolitanism's “new spells.”

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